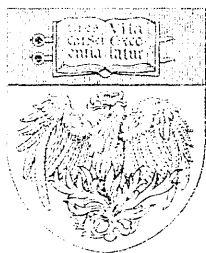


LIVING THOUGHTS.
ROBERTSON.

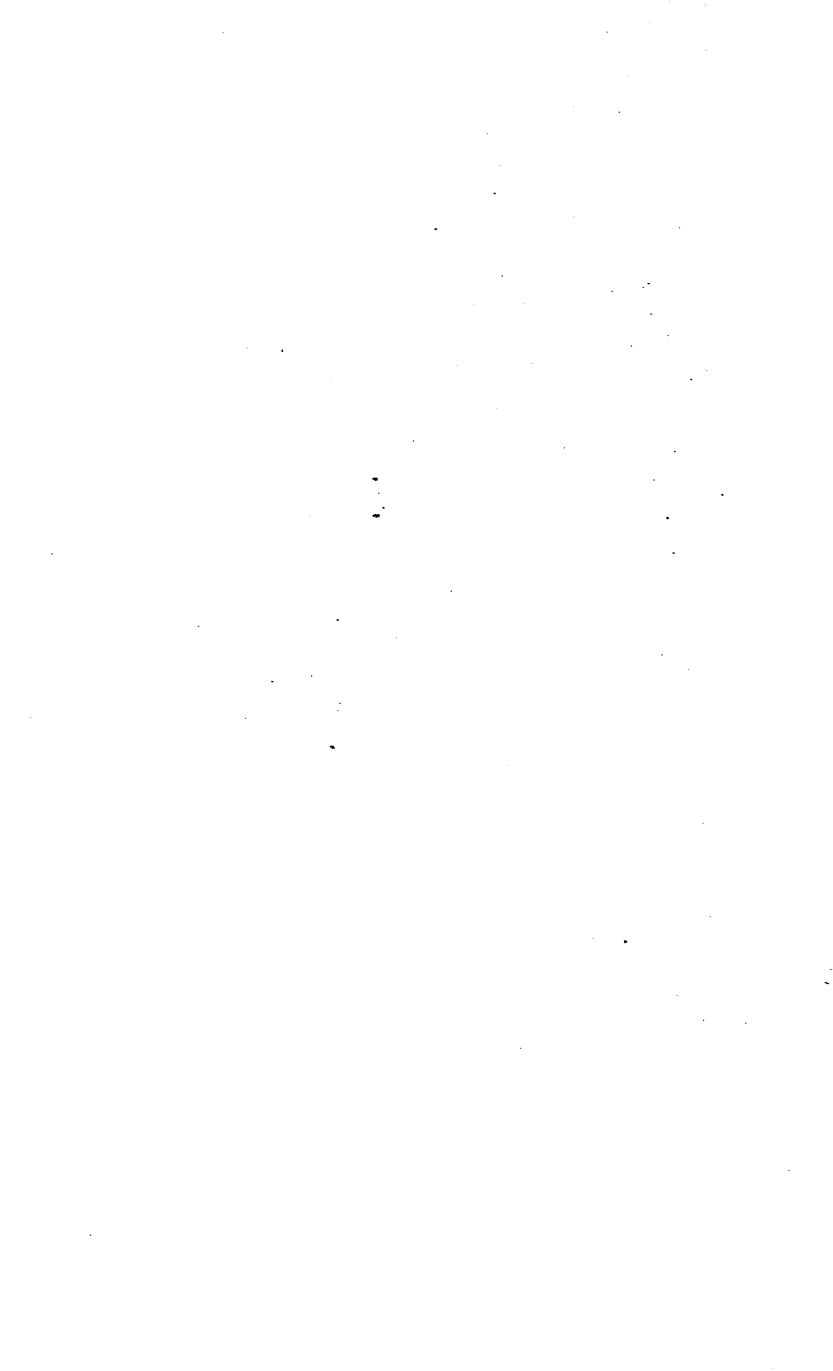
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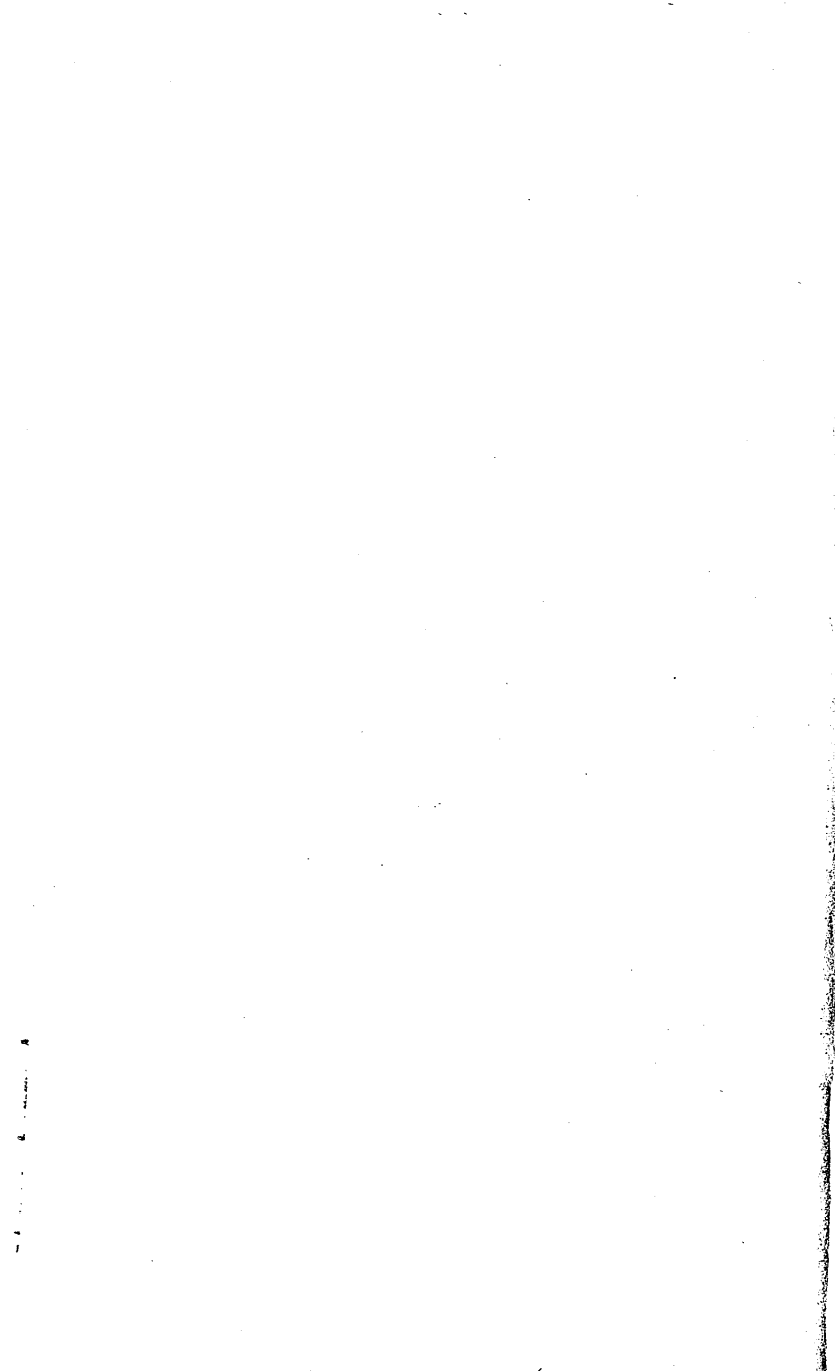


GIFT OF

Mrs H. E. Goodman







ROBERTSON'S
LIVING THOUGHTS.

A THESAURUS.

By KERR BOYCE TUPPER.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By PROF. WILLIAM C. RICHARDS, PH.D.

CHICAGO:
S. C. GRIGGS AND COMPANY.
1881.

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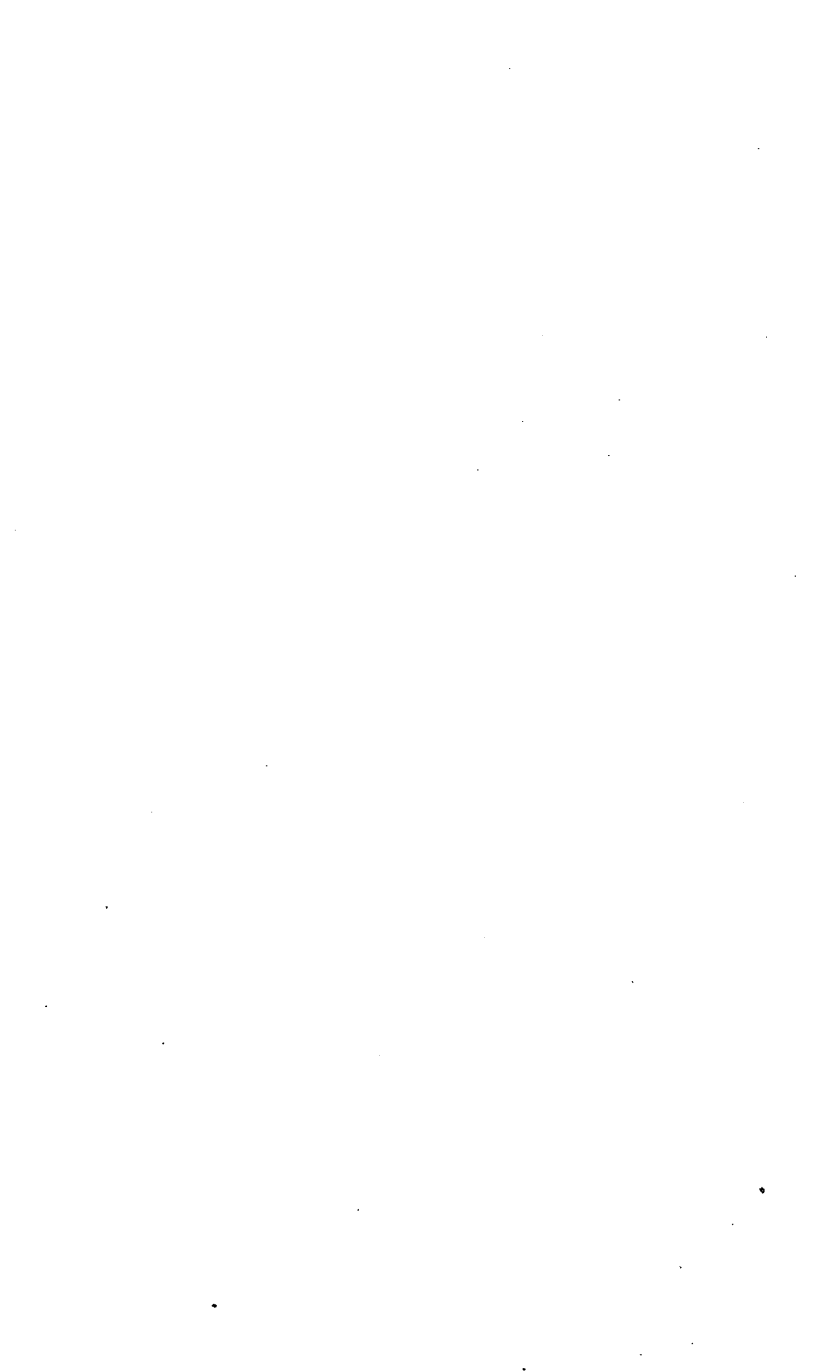
TO MY WIFE,

L. S. T.,

WHOSE SYMPATHETIC INTEREST IN THIS WORK ENHANCED NO
LITTLE THE PLEASURES OF ITS PREPARATION,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE, WITHOUT HER KNOWLEDGE,

MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.



PREFACE.

THE undiminished interest of the public in the chaste and eloquent writings of Frederick W. Robertson, and his abiding and ever-increasing influence upon the theological thought of the present day, furnish the writer's plea for sending out this volume upon its humble mission. It has been prepared during the author's hours of leisure, when, laying aside for a season the more arduous duties of his profession, he has gone out in search of illustrations with which to freshen and make more attractive his pulpit efforts. In the wise and suggestive ideas of this profound and original thinker there cannot fail to be discovered, by any earnest student, "a living source of impulse, a practical direction to thought, a key to many of the problems of theology, and, above all, a path to spiritual freedom." Indeed, Robertson holds a unique position in the theological world. Whilst one may not agree with him in all the positions he assumes, nor sanction all the teachings he seeks to propagate, there is, nevertheless, in his works so much of true, genuine, evangelical sentiment, and that, too, from so warm, noble and sympathetic a heart, that all unprejudiced readers of his works feel attracted toward him, and all acknowledge, without reserve, the beneficent influence of his pulpit ministrations. His writings, so fascinating as literary productions, and so fragrant with the aroma of a gentle, Christ-like spirit, have, by their irresistible magnetism, won their way to many homes, and are to-day prized by thousands as the richest, choicest treasures of their libraries.

In view of this popularity which Robertson's works have achieved, and the growing interest taken in them by scholars of every school of religious belief, it has seemed to the writer both proper and desirable that there should be a companion volume to his Sermons and Life and Lectures, in the form of a thesaurus of the best thoughts of this great man. It is scarcely necessary to remark that many rich gems to be found in the writings of this

popular author have received no place in this small volume, from the fact that the work was not designed, nor does it pretend, to be anything like a complete and exhaustive compilation of the truths he uttered. This must be sought alone in the original volumes, from which the following pages have been extracted. The present work claims to be simply a collection of what presented themselves to the compiler as among the most attractive and suggestive ideas of Robertson's highly cultured mind upon the most important subjects of which he treats in his writings now extant. Such a work, with a carefully prepared index, it was believed, would meet a felt need and find a circulation among a class of persons not inclined to possess the larger volumes of Sermons and Letters and Lectures.

Under such an impression the writer gives to the public the result of his work in this direction. And may the precious truths contained in these pages lead the hearts of all who read them nearer to Him for whose glory and honor it is our delight to labor.

K. B. T.

CHICAGO, ILL., January 1, 1881.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is still significance in the old and homely adage, "Good wine needs no bush," but it is hardly as true to-day as it was when there was less activity, less rivalry, in human affairs. The good—that which is of real worth—will, perhaps, make itself known and felt and valued even in these busy and clamorous times, when the poor and the valueless are vaunted until they catch the roving eye and win the success and applause which belong only to the excellent.

The writings of FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON are known and admired to-day by a select but limited class of readers, the most of whom remember them, probably, in the flush and aroma of their influence a quarter of a century ago. In the long interval—long for this telegraphic age—which has elapsed, they have cast, now and then and here and there, vivid reflections of their intense earnestness, of their fine spirit and of their vigorous style upon many thoughtful minds; and the hurly-burly of modern life, the quick—almost kaleidoscopic—changes of popular taste and feeling in literature, as in more fleeting things, the rapid multiplication of books,—not one nor all of these have yet availed to cast the cloud of oblivion over the life, the sermons and the letters of the brilliant young preacher of Brighton, who, had he lived, might well have become one of England's greatest pulpiteers, as, during his thirteen years of public ministry, he was a preacher remarkable for the power and practicalness, the breadth and brilliance, the fervor and spirituality, of his sermons and addresses.

The book to which these few prefatory pages are almost a needless introduction has a peculiar vindication, and justification indeed of its appearance at this time, in the decided tendency, already referred to, of highest values of the past becoming depreciated, and even obscured, by the multitude of new interests and objects which shine with a fresher lustre; albeit it is that only of reflections from lights sunk below the horizon.

The English pulpit affords few examples of the conscientious, devoted and eminently able Christian minister, more worthy to be regarded and adopted as a model by theological students everywhere, than that which the life and ministry of ROBERTSON presents. His life, viewed only in its literary and social aspects, might be regarded by some, perhaps, as scarcely deserving of elaborate memorials. We should, however, be loth to adopt this conclusion, for, from his boyhood to his early grave, his character was one of charming simplicity, earnestness and devotion to worthy and lofty ends. His spiritual life and writings are his real passport to the honored and perpetual remembrance of the Christian world; but in connection with these, if not independently of them, his is the life of one "who dwelt apart" from the multitude, and whose individuality is beautiful and instructive. He was born in 1816, in London. His father was a captain in the royal artillery, and his three brothers, who all survived him, were also of the army. He outlived three beloved sisters. His education was the earnest care of his father, and both of his parents sedulously watched over his childhood; preserved him as far as possible from evil influences, and fostered in him virtuous feelings, a culture which his whole life richly rewarded. At his various schools he displayed his fondness for military and engineering studies, and all his youth and after life were marked by his great love of nature. Living, as he did during the years of his boyhood, at Leith, in the vicinity of romantic Edinburgh, he reveled in natural beauties and rural delights. He had a pleasing physique, and in his youth was more robust than in his advanced life, when deep thought and severe study had chastened his "iron strength" into refined grace. He loved poetry intensely, and his lectures on Wordsworth are vigorous, appreciative and philosophical. His natural piety—which was of a beautiful type—grew with his college life into spiritual perception and faith, and before he gave up the dream of his youth, of being a soldier of his country, he had become in earnest a soldier of the cross, and so was fitted for the great epoch in his life which witnessed his dedication to the ministry. During brief travels on the continent he met, at Geneva, the daughter of an English baronet, who very soon became his wife; and his domestic happiness contributed to soothe and dissipate some glooms of temperament resulting from his sensitiveness and conscientiousness acting

together to make his standard of devotion and duty one which he feared lest he should not reach.

He prescribed for himself rigid rules of living, physical and mental, and his intellectual industries were incessant and exceptionally brilliant in their results. An admirable talker, he was more popular than he cared to be in society, and to the day of his lamented death he held among his most intellectual friends the rank of a genius and the renown of a ripening scholar.

His ministerial career was, in a sense, an enforced one, not enforced by position like that of a younger son in an aristocratic family (to whom, as is so often the case, the church alone opens a door for service and possible preferment), but constrained by his deep and irresistible convictions of duty, which his strong and persistent inclination to choose a military life did not override, and in obedience to which he surrendered his cherished wish, and even elaborate and advanced preparation for the India cavalry service. This enthusiasm for a soldier's career was early kindled in his bosom, and nourished at his father's fireside by the oft-recounted traditions of his family, and it is not surprising that all his student life, on the continent, in Edinburgh, and at Brazenose, was flushed and characterized by a military spirit and yearning. This, at length, he so far subdued, or rather transformed, and translated into his spiritual being and experience, that he could have said with the great apostle Paul — much of whose spirit his life reflected — "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual," and when his brief, bold work was ended — "I have fought a good fight!" He became a captain of the hosts of the Lord, and fought manfully, heroically and self-sacrificingly the battles of righteousness with sin and wickedness in high places, and in low places no less! So strong was the soldier-passion in his nature that after he gave himself to Christ and the church he cherished the desire to be an army chaplain, and all through his life, in the pulpit and on the platform, there was ever the ring of conflict — the battle-cry — in his clear, crisp utterances, undisguised by their persuasive eloquence of diction, and their depth of religious feeling and motive.

What he once wrote to a friend was as true of his whole experience as it was of his mood at the moment: "There is something of combativeness in me, which prevents the whole vigor being drawn out except when I have an antagonist to deal with, a falsehood to quell, or a wrong to avenge. Could I have chosen my own

period of the world to have lived in, and my own type of life, it should have been the feudal ages and the life of a Cid, the redressor of wrongs." The whole career of ROBERTSON would be misinterpreted, or at least looked at in a partial if not false light, if this chivalric, which was yet not a belligerent, feature of both his intellectual and religious natures were overlooked. He was truly a hero, a knight not of any earthly insignia, but of the cross of his Redeemer and Saviour, and no candid reader of his terse and trenchant utterances, with the added testimony of his self-denying life, can doubt that he carried in his bosom the true spirit of the martyrs, and was one himself really, if only in the self-crucifixion he underwent for his Master's sake.

The reader of the valuable book we are heralding will not need our minute analysis of the diverse and subtle elements which made up his fine and forceful character. He will easily discover for himself the secret of his unique power of fascination for friends and foes alike, in the uncompromising honesty and the fearless expression of his opinions, and of Divine truth as he understood it, and these hallowed to almost superhuman tenderness by the fathomless depths of his sympathies.

When it is considered that the whole life of this remarkable man was embraced in a period of less than four decades, and that for barely thirteen years was he at all conspicuous, secluding himself studiously as much as possible even while he was at Oxford University, though never hiding there his positive and profound religious sentiments and beliefs, it will be conceded that he made and left an impression on his times, and on the English Established Church, especially, which can hardly be assumed for any other clergyman within her pale, whose life was rounded at yet early manhood.

His chivalric spirit sometimes involved him in sharp, though on his part always generous, conflict with churchwardens and dignitaries, and with other not altogether placable men. This was strikingly true of his first intimate relation to the workingmen of Brighton, over whom he gained, at last, a marvelous ascendancy and influence; but only through their recognition of the fearless integrity of his spirit, the dauntless courage of his soul, and the true elevation and humanity of his aims and labors in their behalf. Many who at his early public lectures at the Mechanics' Institute would fain have hooted and silenced him, became, if not his de-

voted friends and adherents, his honest and outspoken admirers and defenders.

It was, doubtless, the military spirit living in his bosom still, and throbbing under the priestly vestments he wore, that made him in his sermons sometimes aggressive in thought, and apparently hostile in opinion to some of the rigid theological tenets to which his church and his ordination vows yet held him in bonds. It is needless here and at this late day to trace out the distinct lines of his deflection from the unqualified literalness and exactitude of the Thirty-nine Articles, which have been not infrequently a fasces holding some uncomfortable rods for the sensitive souls of deep and individual, though entirely conscientious and humble, thinkers such as he was. He preached sometimes beyond the easy comprehension of dull orthodox minds, because he saw beyond the scope of common vision; and his so-called heresies are, we think, referable in the main to misapprehension on the part of creed-bound and error-seeking critics, rather than to any ultimate and vital defects or excesses in his theological views. His startling outspokenness was often only the result of his spirit of aggressiveness against religious views, sound in their formulas, but moribund in their practical influence upon those who entertained them and upon the outside world. Neither his warm heart nor his great intellect would bear dogmatic fetters in the pulpit. He agreed with Wordsworth, whom he honored and loved, in the sentiment

"We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held."

And still more did he claim the freedom to speak as the Lord Christ's ambassador to men the "faith and morals" of His divine philosophy, as his conscience compelled him to do.

He could not palter with his conscience in the pulpit, and there is an instance given, in Mr. Brook's able memoir of him, of his once carrying with him two sermons into the pulpit of a church, the congregation of which was made up chiefly of those of whom Pope says

"See how the world its veterans rewards,
A youth of frolics, an old age of cards."

In the vestry he selected the sermon he thought would be most congenial to his auditors, the other having for its text the injunction

"Love not the world." But after the prayer-service his conscience smote him, and he thought he heard a voice saying, "Robertson, you are a craven; you dare not speak here what you believe." Whereupon he took the aggressive sermon from his pocket and preached it emphatically. This he related to a friend who, having accompanied him to the service, chided him for preaching so brusquely to a pleasure-loving congregation not his own.

We have spoken of the Memoir of ROBERTSON by the Rev. Stopford A. Brook, which was published in 1865. The two volumes contain a great number of his charming letters, than which there are few finer examples of epistolary excellence in English biography. His biographer allows him to draw his own mental portrait in these sparkling, elastic, unconstrained limnings thrown off like the free touches of a true artist.

To these memoirs it is to be hoped that this volume of excerpts, collated with nice discrimination and admirable taste from his published sermons and lectures, as well as from his delightful letters, will carry many new readers with a force which shall overcome the hindrances of little leisure and scores of more modern biographies, yet not half so instructive, so stimulating and so satisfactory as his. From the collection of chosen passages in the following pages the reader who can go no farther after their author, may yet gain a just conception and form a distinct judgment of the intellectual, æsthetic and, above all, spiritual worth of his works. Here the classic motto is in full force, "*Ex pede, Herculem.*"

W. C. R.

CHICAGO, ILL., January 10, 1881.

ROBERTSON'S LIVING THOUGHTS.

ATONEMENT.

THE central doctrine of Christianity is the atonement. Take that away and you obliterate Christianity. If Christianity were merely the imitation of Christ, why, then, the imitation of any other good man—the Apostle Paul or John—might have become a kind of Christianity. If Christianity were merely martyrdom for truth, then, with the exception of a certain amount of degree, I see no difference between the death of Socrates and the death of Jesus Christ. But Christianity is more than this. It is the At-one-ment of the Soul. It is a reconciliation which the life and death of Christ have wrought out for this world—the reconciliation of man to God, the reconciliation of man to man, the reconciliation of man to self, and the reconciliation of man to duty.

ESTIMATE rightly the death of Christ. It was not simply the world's example—it was the world's Sacrifice. He died not merely as a martyr to the truth. His death is the world's life. Ask ye what life is? Life is not exemption from penalty. Salvation is not escape from suffering and punishment. The Redeemer suffered punishment, but the Redeemer's soul had blessedness in the very midst of punishment.

THE death of Christ was a representation of the life of God. To me this is the profoundest of all truths, that the whole of the life of God is the sacrifice of self. God is love; love is sacrifice—to give rather than to receive—the blessedness of self-giving. If the life of God were not such, it would be a falsehood to say that God is love; for even in

our human nature that which seeks to enjoy all instead of giving all is known by a very different name from that of love. All the life of God is a flow of this divine self-giving charity. Creation itself is sacrifice—the self-impartment of the Divine Being. Redemption, too, is sacrifice, else it could not be love; for which reason we will not surrender one iota of the truth that the death of Christ was the sacrifice of God—the manifestation once in time of that which is the eternal law of His life.

To bear pain for the sake of bearing it has in it no moral quality at all, but to bear it rather than surrender truth, or in order to save another, is positive enjoyment as well as ennobling to the soul. Did you ever receive even a blow meant for another, in order to shield that other? Do you not know that there was actual pleasure in the keen pain far beyond the most rapturous thrill of nerve which could be gained from pleasure in the midst of painlessness? Is not the mystic yearning of love expressed in words most purely thus, Let me suffer for him?

This element of love is that which makes this doctrine an intelligible and blessed truth. So sacrifice alone, bare and unrelieved, is ghastly, unnatural and dead; but self-sacrifice, illuminated by love, is warmth and life; it is the death of Christ, the life of God, the blessedness and only proper life of man.

THE sacrifice of Christ is done over again in every life which is lived not to self but to God.

THROUGH the atonement of the Redeemer man becomes reconciled to duty. There is no discord more terrible than that between man and duty. There are few of us who fancy we have found our own places in this world; our lives, our partnerships, our professions, and our trades, are not those which we should have chosen for ourselves. There is an ambition within us which sometimes makes us fancy we are fit for higher things—that we are adapted for other and better things than those to which we are called. But we turn again to the cross of Christ, and the mystery of life becomes plain. The life and death of Christ are the recon-

ciliation of man to the duties which he has to do. You cannot study His marvelous life without perceiving that the whole of its details are uncongenial, mean, trivial, wretched circumstances, from which the spirit of a man revolts.

Love demands a sacrifice, and only by sacrifice can it reconcile itself to self. Then it is that the sacrifice of Christ replies to this, answers it, satisfies it, and makes it plain. The sacrifice of Christ was suffering in love—it was surrender to the will of God. The Apostle Paul felt this: when that Spirit was with him he was reconciled to himself.

THERE are two ways in which you may contemplate that sacrifice. Seen from the world's point of view, it is unjust, gross, cruel. Seen as John saw it, and as God looks at it, it was the sublimest of all truths; one which so entwines itself with our religious consciousness that you might as soon tear from us our very being as our convictions of the reality of Christ's atonement.

Now observe this world of God's. The mountain-rock must have its surface rusted into putrescence and become dead soil before the herb can grow. The destruction of the mineral is the life of the vegetable. Again the same process begins. The "corn of wheat dies," and out of death more abundant life is born. Out of the soil in which deciduous leaves are buried the young tree shoots vigorously, and strikes its roots deep down into the realm of decay and death. Upon the life of the vegetable world the myriad forms of higher life sustain themselves—still the same law: the sacrifice of life to give life. Further still: have we never pondered over that mystery of nature, the dove struck down by the hawk, the deer trembling beneath the stroke of the lion, the winged fish falling into the jaws of the dolphin? It is the solemn law of vicarious sacrifice again. And as often as man sees his table covered with the flesh of animals slain does he behold, whether he think of it or not, the deep mystery and law of being. They have surrendered their innocent lives that he may live.

Nay, further still: it is as impossible for man to live as it is for man to be redeemed, except through vicarious suf-

fering. The anguish of the mother is the condition of the child's life. His very being has its roots in the law of sacrifice; and from his birth onward instinctively this becomes the law which rules his existence. There is no blessing which was ever enjoyed by man which did not come through this. There was never a country cleared for civilization, and purified of its swamps and forests, but the first settlers paid the penalty of that which their successors enjoy. There never was a victory won but the conquerors who took possession of the conquest passed over the bodies of the noblest slain, who died that they might win.

LET no man say that Christ bore the wrath of God. Let no man say that God was angry with His Son. We are sometimes told of a mysterious anguish which Christ endured, the consequence of Divine wrath, the sufferings of a heart laden with the conscience of the world's transgressions, which He was bearing as if they were His own sins. Do not add to the Bible what is not in the Bible. The Redeemer's conscience was not bewildered to feel *that* as His own which was *not* His own. He suffered no wrath of God. Twice came the voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am *well pleased*." There was seen an angel strengthening Him. Nay, even to the last, never did the consciousness of purity and the Father's love forsake Him. "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

THE suffering of Christ was not the same suffering as that from which he saved us. The suffering of Christ was death. But the suffering from which He redeemed us by death was more terrible than death. The pit into which He descended was the grave. But the pit in which we should have been lost forever was the pit of selfishness and despair.

How could the Father be *satisfied* with the death of Christ, unless He saw in the sacrifice mirrored His own love?—for God can be satisfied only with that which is perfect as Himself. Agony does not satisfy God—agony only satisfied Moloch. Nothing satisfies God but the voluntary sacrifice of love.

By the sacrifice of life, voluntary or involuntary, and by that alone, can other and higher life exist. The mineral soil gives its force to the grass, and the grass its life to the cattle, and they sacrifice theirs for man; all that is involuntary, and of course there is in it nothing great or good. But voluntary acquiescence in and working with that manifested law or will of God is the very essence of human goodness. Is it not another name for Love?

WHAT could it be that suffered but a human soul? Deity is impassible. God was not angry with Him? God could not be angry with self-sacrificing love. He could not, without denying His own nature, annex Hell—that is, an evil conscience and remorse—to perfect goodness. Christ endured the penalty of imputed sin, the sins of others. But imputed sin is not actual sin, though constantly we see it bear the penalty of such—that is, be punished as such. “The chastisement of our iniquities was upon him.” It was not merely the “penalty of his own daring” that He bore. He bore the penalty of our transgressions. He crushed the head of the serpent, Evil, which would otherwise have crushed us, and the fang pierced Him. There is a parallel in the death of Socrates, so far as martyrdom goes; but *His* death was sacrifice, not merely martyrdom; Socrates was simply true to his convictions, and suffered for them. *He* distinctly came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. He alone, of all that are woman-born, conceived the idea of a contest with evil for the world’s sake.

THE conceivableness of the atonement follows from the analogies drawn from nature’s laws working in the wheat; but the *proof* of the atonement is the word of Christ Himself.

THE sacrifice of Christ does not alter God’s will: it does not make sin a trifle: it does not make it safer to commit offenses. It does not abrogate, but declares God’s law.

RECONCILIATION is identical with atonement. In Romans, v. 11, the word “atonement” occurs, but on referring to

the margin you will find that it is the same word which is here translated "reconciliation." Here, therefore, you might read: "Who hath *atoned* us to himself by Jesus Christ." We cannot repeat this too often. The "atonement" of the Bible is the reconciliation between God and man.

HERE is the mystery of the atonement. God is reconciled to men for Christ's sake. Earnestly I insist that the atonement is through Christ. God is reconciled to humanity in Christ; then to us through Him. "God was in Christ." It was a Divine humanity. To that humanity God is reconciled: there could be no enmity between God and Christ: "I and my Father are one." To all those in whom Christ's Spirit is, God imputes the righteousness which is as yet only seminal, germinal: a seed, not a tree; a spring, not a river; an aspiration, not an attainment; a righteousness in faith, not a righteousness in works. It is not, then, an actual righteousness, but an imputed righteousness.

It was Christ's work to reconcile God to man. That is done, and done forever; we cannot add anything to it. That is a priestly power; and it is at our peril that we claim such a power. Ours is ministerial: His alone was priestly. We cannot infuse supernatural virtue into baptismal water; we cannot transform bread and wine into heavenly aliment. We can offer no sacrifice: the concluding sacrifice is done. "By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." So far, then, as we represent anything besides this as *necessary*, so far do we frustrate it, and turn the Christian ministry into a sacrificial priesthood.

THE pain of Christ gave God no pleasure—only the love that was tested by pain—the love of perfect obedience. He was obedient unto death.

TO SAY that He bore my sins in this sense—that he was haunted by an evil conscience and its horrors for this lie of mine, and that cruel word, etc., is to make a statement of which it is not enough to say that it is false: it is absolutely unmeaning, as well as destructive of all *real* conception of the enormity of sin.

BAPTISM.

ABLUTION in the East is almost a religious duty: the dust and heat weigh upon the spirits and heart like a load; the removal is refreshment and happiness. And it was impossible to see that significant act—in which the convert went down into the water, travel-worn and soiled with dust, disappeared for one moment, and then emerged pure and fresh—without feeling that the symbol answered to, and interpreted a strong craving of the human heart. It is the desire to wash away that which is past and evil. We would fain go to another country and begin life afresh. We look upon the grave almost with complacency, from the fancy that there we shall lie down to sleep and wake fresh and new. It was this same longing that expressed itself in heathenism by the fabled river of forgetfulness, of which the dead must drink before they can enter into rest.

BAPTISM is the visible declaration of this saying, “Now, remember you are a child of God; from henceforth live as such.”

To mankind in the mass, invisible truths become real only when they have been made visible. All spiritual facts must have an existence in form for the human mind to rest on. This pledge is baptism. Baptism is a visible witness to the world of that which the world is forever forgetting. A common humanity united in God.

BIBLE.

THE words which came from Israel's prophets have been the life-blood of the world's devotions. The teachers, the psalmists, the prophets, and the law-givers of this despised nation spoke out truths that have struck the key-note of the heart of man; and this, not because they were of Jewish, but just because they were of universal application.

This collection of books has been to the world what no other book has ever been to a nation. States have been founded on its principles. Kings rule by a compact based on it. Men hold the Bible in their hands when they prepare

to give solemn evidence affecting life, death or property; the sick man is almost afraid to die unless the book be within reach of his hands; the battle-ship goes into action with one on board whose office is to expound it; its prayers, its psalms are the language which we use when we speak to God; eighteen centuries have found no holier, no diviner language. If ever there has been a prayer or a hymn enshrined in the heart of a nation, you are sure to find its basis in the Bible. There is no new religious idea given to the world but it is merely the development of something given in the Bible. The very translation of it has fixed language and settled the idioms of speech. Germany and England speak as they speak because the Bible was translated. It has made the most illiterate peasant more familiar with the history, customs and geography of ancient Palestine than with the localities of his own country. Men who know nothing of the Grampians, of Snowden, or of Skiddaw, are at home in Zion, the Lake of Gennesareth, or among the rills of Carmel. People who know little about London know by heart the places in Jerusalem where those blessed feet trod which were nailed to the cross. Men who know nothing of the architecture of a Christian cathedral can yet tell you all about the pattern of the holy temple. Even this shows us the influence of the Bible. The orator holds a thousand men for half an hour breathless—a thousand men as one, listening to his single word. But this Word of God has held a thousand nations for thrice a thousand years spell-bound; held them by an abiding power, even the universality of its truth; and we feel it to be no more a collection of books, but *the* book.

SCRIPTURE is full of Christ. From Genesis to Revelation every thing breathes of him—not every letter of every sentence, but the spirit of every chapter. It is full of Christ, but not in the way that some suppose; for there is nothing more miserable, as specimens of perverted ingenuity, than the attempts of certain commentators and preachers to find remote and recondite and intended allusions to Christ everywhere. For example, they chance to find in the construction of the temple the fusion of two metals, and this they conceive is meant to show the union of Divinity with

Humanity in Christ. If they read of coverings to the tabernacle, they find implied the doctrine of imputed righteousness. If it chance that one of the curtains of the tabernacle be red, they see in that the prophecy of the blood of Christ. If they are told that the kingdom of heaven is a pearl of great price, they will see it in the allusion that, as a pearl is the production of animal suffering, so the kingdom of heaven is produced by the sufferings of the Redeemer.

It is the universal applicability of Scripture which has made the influence of the Bible universal: this book has held spell-bound the hearts of nations in a way in which no single book has ever held men before.

THE inspiration of the Bible is a large subject. I hold it to be inspired, not dictated. It is the Word of God—the words of man: as the former, perfect; as the latter, imperfect. God the Spirit, as the Sanctifier, does not produce absolute perfection of human character; God the Spirit, as an Inspirer, does not produce absolute perfection of human knowledge; and for the same reason in both cases—the human element which is mixed up—else there could have been no progressive dispensations. Let us take the case—the history of the creation. Now, I hold that a spiritual revelation from God *must* involve scientific incorrectness: it could not be from God unless it did. Suppose that the cosmogony had been given in terms which would satisfy our present scientific knowledge, or say, rather, the terms of absolute scientific truth: It is plain that, in this case, the men of that day would have rejected its authority; they would have said, “Here is a man who tells us the earth goes round the sun: and the sky, which we see to be a stereoma fixed and not far up, is infinite space, with no *firmament* at all, and so on. Can we trust one in matters unseen who is manifestly in error in things seen and level to the senses? Can we accept his revelation about God’s nature and man’s duty when he is wrong in things like these?” Thus, the faith of this and subsequent ages must have been purchased at the expense of the unbelief of all previous ages. I hold it, therefore, as a proof of inspiration of the Bible, and divinely wise, to have given a spiritual revelation, *i. e.*, a revelation concerning the truths of the soul and its relation

to God, in popular and incorrect language. Do not mistake that word incorrect: incorrect is one thing, false another. It is scientifically incorrect to say that the sun rose this morning; but it is not false, because it conveys all that is required, for the nonce, to be known about the fact, time, etc. And if God were giving a revelation in this present day, He would give it in modern phraseology, and the men He inspired would talk of sunrise, sunset, etc. Men of science smile at the futile attempts to reconcile Moses and geology. I give up the attempt at once, and say the inspiration of the Bible remains intact for all that—nay, it would not have been inspired except on this condition of incorrectness.

BODY.

WE are fearfully and wonderfully made. Of that constitution which in our ignorance we call union of soul and body we know little respecting what is cause and what is effect. We would fain believe that the mind has power over the body, but it is just as true that the body rules the mind. Causes apparently the most trivial—a heated room, want of exercise, a sunless day, a northern aspect—will make all the difference between happiness and unhappiness, between faith and doubt, between courage and indecision. To our fancy there is something humiliating in being thus at the mercy of our animal organism. We would fain find nobler causes for our emotions. We talk of the hiding of God's countenance, and the fiery darts of Satan. But the picture given here is true. The body is the channel of our noblest emotions as well as our sublimest sorrows.

SOME sins are committed without the body; sins of sensuality and animal indulgence are *against* the body. Our bodies, which are "members of Christ," to be ruled by His Spirit, become by such sins unfit for immortality with Christ. This is an awful truth. Sins committed against the body affect that wondrous tissue which we call the nervous system: the source of all our acutest suffering and intensest blessing is rendered so susceptible by God as to be at once our punishment or reward. Sin carries with it its own punishment. There is not a sin of indulgence—gluttony,

intemperance, or licentiousness of any form, which does not write its terrible retribution on our bodies.

CHANGE.

THE world changes its complexion in every age.

THE child on whose young face the mother now gazes so tenderly changes with years into the man with furrowed brow and silvered hair; constitutions are formed and broken, friendships pass, love decays—who can say he possesses the same now that blessed him in his early life? All passes whilst we look upon it. A most unreal, imaginative life. The spirit of life ever weaving—the spirit of death ever unweaving; all things putting on change.

ON this earth there can be no rest for man. By rest we mean the attainment of a state beyond which there can be no change. Politically, morally, spiritually, there can be no rest for man here. In one country alone has that system been fully carried out which, conservative of the past, excludes all desire of progress and improvement for the future; but it is not to China that we should look for the perfection of human society. There is one ecclesiastical system which carries out the same spirit, looking rather to the Church of the past than to the Church of the future; but it is not in the Romish that we shall find the model of a Christian Church. In Paradise it may have been right to be at rest, to desire no change; but ever since the fall every system that tends to check the onward progress of mankind is fatally, radically, curelessly wrong. The motto on every Christian banner is "Forward." There is no resting in the present, no satisfaction in the past.

Go to the side of the ocean which bounds our country, and watch the tide going out, bearing with it the sand which it has worn from the cliffs; the very boundaries of our land are changing; they are not the same as they were when these words were written. Every day new relationships are forming around us; new circumstances are calling upon us to act—to act manfully, firmly, decisively and up

to the occasion, remembering that an opportunity once gone is gone forever. Indulge not in vain regrets for the past, in vainer resolves for the future—act, act in the present.

To mourn over old superstitions and effete creeds is just as unwise as is the grief of the mother mourning over the form which was once her child. She cannot separate her affection from that form—those hands, those limbs, those features, are they not her child? The true answer is, her child is not there: it is only the form of her child. And it is as unwise to mourn over the decay of those institutions—the change of human forms—as it was unwise in Jonah to mourn with that passionate sorrow over the decay of the gourd which had sheltered him from the heat of the noon-tide sun. A worm had eaten the root of the gourd, and it was gone. But He who made the gourd the shelter to the weary—the shadow of those who are oppressed by the noontide heat of life—lived on: Jonah's God. And so, brethren, all things change—all things outward change and alter, but the God of the Church lives on.

THIS visible world is only a form and an appearance. God has written decay on all around us: on the hills, which are everlasting only in poetry, their outlines changing within the memory of man; on the sea-coast, fringed with shingle. Look at it receding from our white cliffs; its boundaries are not what they were. This law is engraven on our own frames. Even in the infant the progress of dissolution has visibly begun. The principle of development is at work, and development is but the necessary step toward decay. There is a Force at work in everything, call it what you will—Life or Death: it is reproduction out of decay. The outward form is in a perpetual flux and change.

We stand amidst the ruins of other days, and as they moulder before our eyes they tell us of generations which have mouldered before them, and of nations which have crossed the theater of life and have disappeared. We join in the gladness of the baptism, and the years roll on so rapidly that we are almost startled to find ourselves standing at the wedding. But pass on a few years more, and the young heart for which there was so much gladness in the

future has had its springs dried up. He belongs to a generation which has passed, and they among whom he lingers feel as if he had lived too long; and then he drops silently into the grave to make way for others. One of our deepest thinkers—a man of profoundest observation, who thought by means of a boundless heart—has told us, in words trite and familiar to us all,

“All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances:
And one man in his time plays many parts.”

THINGS are passing; our friends are dropping off from us; strength is giving way; our relish for earth is going, and the world no longer wears to our hearts the radiance that once it wore. We have the same sky above us and the same scenes around us; but the freshness that our hearts extracted from everything in boyhood, and the glory that seemed to rest once on earth and life, have faded away forever: sad and gloomy truths to the man who is going down to the grave with his work undone; not sad to the Christian, but rousing, exciting, invigorating. If it be the eleventh hour, we have no time for folding of the hands—we will work the faster. Through the changefulness of life; through the solemn tolling of the bell of time which tells us that another, and another, and another are gone before us; through the noiseless rush of a world which is going down with gigantic footsteps into nothingness, let not the Christian slack his hand from work, for he that doeth the will of God may defy hell itself to quench his immortality.

CHARACTER.

SHALLOW soil is like superficial character. You meet with such persons in life. There is nothing deep about them; all they do and all they have is on the surface. The superficial servant’s work is done, but lazily, partially—not thoroughly. The superficial workman’s labor will not bear looking into, but it bears a showy outside. The very dress of such persons betrays the slatternly, incomplete character of their minds. When religion comes in contact with persons of this stamp

it shares the fate of everything else. It is taken up in a superficial way.

AFFECTIONATENESS, maidenly self-possession and a quiet spirit, are more likely to bud into a beautiful character hereafter than that impetuosity of sentiment which too often makes life the prey of wild and self-destructive passions. Principle is a higher thing than feeling, and will stand life's terrible test far better.

THERE are two sides to our character: one so evil, fallen, strengthless, that at times it is on the brink of hell; and one which is risen with Christ, redeemed in His resurrection, which seeks the things that are above, not those that are below; which brings us sometimes to the very verge of heaven; which makes us almost feel that the breath of God is breathing upon us, and that we hear the harpings of the everlasting harps. The true Christian spirit is one of mingled loftiness and humility—of majesty and abasement—now with the stride of a conqueror and a king—now a captive, with the foot of the conqueror on his neck. Let us recognize our two selves; be humble for our evil self, but be thankful for our diviner self; and not, through affected modesty, ignore the blessed fact that God is with us. "Of such an one will I glory, but of myself I will not glory."

THERE is a certain mysterious tact of sympathy and antipathy by which we discover the like and unlike of ourselves in others' character. You cannot find out a man's opinions unless he chooses to express them; but his feelings and his character you may. He cannot hide them: you feel them in his look and mien, and tones and motion. There is, for instance, a certain something in sincerity and reality which cannot be mistaken—a certain something in real grief which the most artistic counterfeit cannot imitate. It is distinguished by nature, not education. There is a something in an impure heart which purity detects afar off. Marvelous it is how innocence perceives the approach of evil which it cannot know by experience: just as the dove which has never seen a falcon trembles by instinct at its approach; just as a blind man detects by finer sensitiveness

the passing of the cloud which he cannot see overshadowing the sun. It is wondrous how the truer we become the more unerringly we know the *ring* of truth, discern whether a man be true or not, and can fasten at once upon the rising lie in word and look, and dissembling act. Wondrous how the charity of Christ in the heart finely perceives the slightest aberration from charity in others, in ungentle thought or slanderous tone.

THE worldly-wise have maxims and rules; but the finer shades and delicacies of truth of character escape them.

COMPOSURE is very often the highest result of strength. Did we never see a man receive a flagrant insult, and only grow a little pale and then reply quietly? That was a man spiritually strong. Or did we never see a man in anguish stand, as if carved out of solid rock, mastering himself? or one bearing a hopeless daily trial remain silent, and never tell the world what it was that cankered his home-peace? That is strength. He who with strong passions remains chaste; he who, keenly sensitive, with manly power of indignation in him, can be provoked and yet refrain himself, and forgive;—these are strong men, spiritual heroes.

OBSERVE, however, to distinguish between the act and the actor: It is not the thing done, but the doer who lasts. The thing done often is a failure. The cup given in the name of Christ may be given to one unworthy of it; but think ye that the love with which it was given has passed away? Has it not printed itself indelibly in the character by the very act of giving? Bless, and if the Son of peace be there, your act succeeds; but if not, your blessing shall return unto you again. In other words, the act may fail, but the doer of it abideth forever.

MEN of thought and quiet contemplation exercise a wonderful influence over men of action. We admire that which we are not ourselves. The man of business owns the control of the man of religious thoughtfulness. Like coalesces in this world with unlike. The strong and the weak,

the contemplative and the active, bind themselves together. They are necessary for each other. The active soldiers and the scheming publicans came to the lonely, ascetic John to hear something of that still, inner life, of which their own career could tell them nothing.

Love begets love; faith generates faith; lofty lives nourish the germs of exalted life in others. There is a spiritual birth. John was the successor of the spirit of Elias. Luther was the offspring of the mind of Paul. We are children of Abraham if we share in the faith of Abraham; we are the successors of the Apostles if we have a spirit similar to theirs.

THERE are things precious, not from the materials of which they are made, but from the risk and difficulty of bringing them to perfection. The speculum of the largest telescope foils the optician's skill in casting. Too much or too little heat—the interposition of a grain of sand, a slight alteration in the temperature of the weather, and all goes to pieces—it must be recast. Therefore, when successfully finished, it is a matter for almost the congratulation of a country. Rarer, and more difficult still than the costliest part of the most delicate of instruments, is the completion of Christian character. Only let there come the heat of persecution, or the cold of human desertion, a little of the world's dust, and the rare and costly thing is cracked, and becomes a failure.

FOR it is a strange and mournful truth, that the qualities which enable men to shine are exactly those which minister to the worst ruin. God's highest gifts—talent, beauty, feeling, imagination, power: they carry with them the possibility of the highest heaven and the lowest hell. Be sure that it is by that which is highest in you that you may be lost. It is the awful warning, and not the excuse of evil, that the light which leads astray is light from heaven. The shallow fishing-boat glides safely over the reefs where the noble bark strands: it is the very might and majesty of her career that bury the sharp rock deeper in her bosom.

THERE is something almost awful in the thought of a man who was so thoroughly in the next world that he needed not the consolations of this world. And yet, observe, there is nothing encouraging for us in this. It is very grand to look upon, very commanding, very full of awe; but it is so much above us, so little like anything human that we know of, that we content ourselves with gazing on him as on the gliding swallow's flight, which we wonder at, but never think of imitating.

BLEMISHED character damages evidence.

THE tinsel must be seen at a distance, or it will be discovered to be counterfeit. We may gaze on goodness, and the more we gaze the more it shines; like the sunlight, no less pure and beautiful when it brightens the wayside thistle than when it glistens on the emeralds and the diamonds of a princely diadem.

LEARN to be neither depressed unduly by blame, nor, on the other side, to be too much exalted by praise. Life's experience should teach us this. Even in war honors fall as by chance, with cruel and ludicrous injustice; often the hero whom the populace worship is only made so by accident. Often the coronet falls on brows that least deserve it.

SAY what you will, it is not interest, but the sight of noble qualities and true sacrifice, which commands the devotion of the world. Yea, even the bandit and the outcast will bend before that as before a Divine thing. In one form or another it draws all men, it commands all men.

FEELINGS pass, thoughts and imaginations pass; dreams pass; work remains. Through eternity, what you have done, that you are. They tell us that not a sound has ever ceased to vibrate through space; that not a ripple has ever been lost upon the ocean. Much more is it true that not a true thought, nor a pure resolve, nor a loving act, has ever gone forth in vain.

CHRIST is Deity, under the limitations of humanity. But there is presented in Christ for worship, not power nor

beauty, nor physical life but the moral image of God's perfections. Through the heart and mind and character of Jesus it was that the Divinest streamed. Divine *character*, that was given in Christ to worship.

THE weak mind throws the blame on circumstances; unable itself to subdue its own passions, it imagines there is some law in the universe that so ordains it; insists that the blame is on circumstances and destiny.

SHOULD any of you have to bear attacks on your character, or life, or doctrine, defend yourself with meekness; and if defense should but make matters worse—and when accusations are vague, as is the case but too often,—why, then commit yourself fully to the truth. Outpray, outpreach, outlive the calumny.

THERE is no principle in education and in life more sure than this—to stigmatize is to ruin; to take away character is to take away all. There is no power committed to man, capable of use and abuse, more certain and more awful than this: “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.”

How often, after speaking hastily the thought which was uppermost, and feeling the cheek burn, you have looked back in admiration on some one who held his tongue even though under great provocation to speak.

EVERY sin you slay—the spirit of that sin passes into you transformed into strength; every passion, not merely kept in abeyance by asceticism, but subdued by a higher impulse, is so much character strengthened.

CIRCUMSTANCES of outward condition are not the sole efficient in the production of character, but they are efficient which must not be ignored. Favorable condition will not produce excellence, but the want of it often hinders excellence.

THE fact is, we have one thing, and only one, to do here on earth—to win the character of heaven before we die.

This is practical, and simple to understand. We cannot do it alone; but the Spirit's agency is given us, under our present dispensation, to mould us by His influences into the image of God.

To be humble and loving—that is true life. Do not let insult harden you, nor cruelty rob you of tenderness. If men wound your heart, let them not embitter it; and then yours will be the victory of the Cross. You will conquer as Christ conquered, and bless as He blessed.

CHARITY.

THERE are some who go through life complaining of this world: they say they have found nothing but treachery and deceit; the poor are ungrateful, and the rich are selfish. Yet we do not find such the best men. Experience tells us that each man most keenly and unerringly detects in others the vice with which he is most familiar himself.

Oh, that miserable state, when to the jaundiced eye all good transforms itself into evil, and the very instruments of health become the poison of disease! Beware of every approach of this! beware of that spirit which controversy fosters, of watching only for the evil in the character of an antagonist! beware of that habit which becomes the slanderer's life, of magnifying every speck of evil and closing the eye to goodness! till at last men arrive at the state in which generous, universal love (which is heaven) becomes impossible, and a suspicious, universal hate takes possession of the heart, and *that* is hell!

THE man who can be most charitable is not the man who is himself most lax. Deep knowledge of human nature tells us it is exactly the reverse. He who shows the rough and thorny road to heaven is he who treads the primrose path himself.

WHERE is the professional man, secular or clerical, who will so speak of another of the same profession, while struggling with him in honorable rivalry, or so assist him, as to

insure that the brightest lustre shall shine upon what he really is?

REMEMBER, there may be true liberality when a man gives nothing to religious societies. Suppose he spends his money in employing labor wisely, suppose he gives good wages, suppose he invests capital in enterprises which call out the highest qualities—then such a man, although directly giving nothing, indirectly gives much, and is charitable in the true sense of the word.

HE who is most liberal in the case of a foreign famine or a distant mission will be found to have only learned more liberal love toward the poor and the unspiritualized of his own land.

Do right, and God's recompense to you will be the power of doing more right. Give, and God's reward to you will be the spirit of giving more—a blessed spirit, for it is the Spirit of God Himself, whose life is the blessedness of giving. Love, and God will pay you with the capacity of more love; for love is Heaven—love is God within you.

OH, be sure that he whose soul has anchored itself to rest on the deep, calm sea of truth does not spend his strength in raving against those who are still tossed by the winds of error. Spasmodic violence of words is one thing, strength of conviction is another.

KINDLY words, sympathizing attentions, watchfulness against wounding men's sensitiveness—these cost very little, but they are priceless in their value. Are they not, brethren, almost the staple of our daily happiness? From hour to hour, from moment to moment, we are supported, blest, by small kindnesses.

IN order to elevate Christianity it is not necessary to vilify heathenism.

PLAINLY, it is not the value of the contribution, but the love of the contributor, which makes it precious. The offer-

ing is sanctified or made unholy in God's sight by the spirit in which it is given. The most striking passage in which this truth is illustrated is that of the widow's mite. Tried by the gauge of the treasurer of a charity, it was next to nothing. Tried by the test of charity, it was more than that of all. Her coins, worthless in the eyes of the rich Pharisee, were in the eyes of Christ transformed by her love into the gold of the Eternal City.

THE charity which desires another's goodness above his well-being, that alone succeeds in the work of restoration.

NOTHING chills the heart like universal distrust. Nothing freezes the genial current of the soul so much as doubts of human nature.

BUT do not hate men in intellectual error. To hate a man for his errors is as unwise as to hate one who, in casting up an account, has made an error against himself.

How possible it is to mix together the vigor of a masculine and manly intellect with the tenderness and charity which is taught by the Gospel of Christ. No man ever breathed so freely when on earth the air and atmosphere of heaven as the Apostle Paul—no man ever soared so high above all prejudices, narrowness, littlenesses, scruples, as he; and yet no man ever bound himself as Paul bound himself to the ignorance, the scruples, the prejudices of his brethren. So that what in other cases was infirmity, imbecility and superstition, gathered around it in his case the pure, high spirit of Christian charity and Christian delicacy.

CHILDHOOD.

STRONGER far than education—going on before education can commence, possibly from the very first moments of consciousness, we begin to impress ourselves on our children. Our character, voice, features, qualities—modified, no doubt, by entering into a new human being, and into a different organization—are impressed upon our children. Not the inculcation of opinions, but much rather the formation of

principles, and of the tone of character, the derivation of qualities. Physiologists tell us of the derivation of the mental qualities from the father and of the moral from the mother. But be this as it may, there is scarcely one here who cannot trace back his present religious character to some impression, in early life, from one or other of his parents,—a tone, a look, a word, a habit, or even, it may be, a bitter, miserable exclamation of remorse.

INNOCENT, literally, no man ever is. We come into the world with tendencies to evil; but there was a time in our lives when those were only tendencies. A proneness to sin we had; but we had not yet sinned. The moment had not yet arrived when that cloud settles down upon the heart, which in all of after-life is never entirely removed: the sense of guilt, the anguish of lost innocence, the restless feeling of a heart no longer pure.

It is a very deep and beautiful and precious truth that the Eternal Son had a human and progressive childhood. Happy the child who is suffered to be and content to be what God meant it to be—a child while childhood lasts. Happy the parent who does not force artificial manners, precocious feeling, premature religion.

CHRIST.

THE Bible is full of Christ. Every unfulfilled aspiration of humanity in the past; all partial representation of perfect character; all sacrifices—nay, even those of idolatry—point to the fulfillment of what we want, the answer to every longing—the type of perfect humanity, the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST was the Son of God. But remember in what sense He ever used this name—Son of God because Son of Man. He claims Sonship in virtue of His Humanity. Now, in the whole previous revelation through the prophets, etc., one thing was implied—only through man can God be known: only through a perfect man, perfectly revealed. Hence He came, “the brightness of His Father’s glory, the

express image of His person." Christ, then, must be loved as Son of man before He can be adored as Son of God. In personal love and adoration of Christ the Christian religion consists, not in correct morality, or in correct doctrines, but in a homage to the King.

Now, unquestionably, the belief in the Divinity of Christ is waning among us. They who hold it have petrified it into a theological dogma without life or warmth, and thoughtful men are more and more beginning to put it aside. How are we, then, to get back this belief in the Son of God? by authority, or by the old way of persecution? The time for these has passed. The other way is to begin at the beginning. Begin as the Bible begins, with Christ the Son of Man. Begin with Him as God's character revealed under the limitations of humanity. Lay the foundations of a higher faith deeply in a belief of his Humanity. See Him as He was. Breathe His Spirit. After that, try to comprehend His Life. Enter into his Childhood. Feel with Him when He looked round about Him in anger, when He vindicated the crushed woman from the powerless venom of her ferocious accusers; when He stood alone in the solitary Majesty of Truth in Pilate's judgment-hall; when the light of the Roman soldiers' torches flashed on Kedron in the dark night, and He knew that watching was too late; when His heart-strings gave way upon the Cross. Walk with Him through the Marriage Feast. See how the sick and weary came to Him instinctively; how men, when they saw Him, felt their sin, they knew not why, and fell at His feet; how guilt unconsciously revealed itself, and all that was good in men was drawn out, and they became higher than themselves in His presence. Realize this. Live with Him till He becomes a living thought, ever present, and you will find a reverence growing up which compares with nothing else in human feeling. You will feel that a slighting word spoken of him wounds with a dart more sharp than personal insult. You will feel that to bow at the name of Jesus is no form at will of others, but a relief and welcome. And if it should ever chance that, finding yourself thrown upon your own self and cut off from sects—suspected, in quest of a truth which no man gives—then that wondrous sense of strength and friendship comes—the being alone

with Christ with the strength of a manlier independence. Slowly, then, this almost insensibly merges into adoration. For what is it to adore Christ? — to call Him God: to say Lord, Lord? No. Adoration is the mightiest love the soul can give, call it by what name you will.

AND such was the work of Christ. They saw him at work among the fragments and mouldering wreck of our humanity, and sneered. But He took the dry bones, such as Ezekiel saw in vision, which no man thought could live, and he breathed into them the breath of life. He took the scattered fragments of our ruined nature, interpreted their meaning, showed the original intent of those powers which were now destructive only, drew out from publicans and sinners yearnings which were incomprehensible, and feelings which were misunderstood, vindicated the beauty of the original intention, showed the Divine Order below the chaos, exhibited to the world once more a human soul in the form in which God had made it, saying to the dry bones "Live!"

OH, be sure all the universe tells of Christ and leads to Christ. The stars preach the mind of Christ. Not as of old when a mystic star guided their feet to Bethlehem, but now, to the mind of the astronomer, they tell of eternal order and harmony; they speak of changeless law, where no caprice reigns. You may calculate the star's return, and to the day and hour and minute it will be there. This is the fidelity of God. These mute masses obey the law impressed upon them by their Creator's hand unconsciously, and that law is the law of their own nature. To understand the laws of our nature, and consciously and reverently to obey them, that is the mind of Christ, the sublimest spirit of the Gospel.

THERE is no disappointment in Christ. Christ can be our souls' sovereign. Christ can be our guide. Christ can absorb all the admiration which our hearts long to give.

JESUS of Nazareth is the central point in which all the converging lines of Scripture meet.

WHAT the word is to the thought, that is Christ to God. Creation was one expression of this—of His inmost feelings of beauty and loveliness; whether it be the doleful sighings of the night wind, or the flower that nestles in the grass, they tell alike of love. So has He also shown that love on earth, in the outward manifestation of the life of Christ, not only in the translated Word which we have, beautiful as it is, but in the living Word. Read without *this*, history is a dark, tangled web, philosophy a disappointing thing. Without *this* light society is imperfect, and the greatest men small and insignificant. From all these we turn to Christ; *here* is that perfect Word to which our hearts echo, where no one syllable is wrong.

THE infinite significance of the life of Christ is not exhausted by saying that He was a perfect man. The notion of the earlier Socinians that He was a pattern man, commissioned from Heaven with a message to teach men how to live, and supernaturally empowered to live in that perfect way Himself, is immeasurably short of truth. For perfection merely human does not attract; rather it repels. It may be copied in form: it cannot be imitated in spirit; for men only imitate that from which enthusiasm and life are caught, for it does not inspire nor fire with love.

Faultless men and pattern children—you may admire them, but you admire coldly. Praise them as you will, no one is better for their example. No one blames them, and no one loves them. They kindle no enthusiasm; they create no likeness of themselves; they never reproduce themselves in other lives—the true prerogative of all original life.

If Christ had been only a faultless being, He would never have set up in the world a new type of character which, at the end of two thousand years, is fresh and life-giving and inspiring still. He never would have regenerated the world. He never would have “drawn all men unto Him” by being lifted up a self-sacrifice, making self-devotion beautiful. In Christ the Divine and human blended: immutability joined itself to mutability. There was in Him the Divine which remained fixed; the human which was constantly developing. One uniform idea and purpose characterized His whole life with a Divine immutable unity

throughout, but it was subject to the laws of human growth. For the soul of Christ was not cast down upon this world a perfect thing at once. Spotless?—yes. Faultless?—yes. Tempted, yet in all points without sin?—yes. But perfection is more than faultlessness. All Scripture coincides in telling us that the ripe perfection of His manhood was reached step by step. There was a power and a life within Him which were to be developed, which could only be developed, like all human strength and goodness, by toil of brain and heart. Life up-hill all the way; and every foot-print by which He climbed left behind for us, petrified on the hard rock, and indurated into history forever, to show us when and where and how He toiled and won.

WHEN a man has learned to know the infinite love of God in Christ to him, then he discovers something which will not elude his hold, and an affection which will not grow cold; for the comparison of God's long-suffering and repeated pardon with his own heartless ingratitude convinces him that it is an unchangeable love.

It is the heart alone which can give us a key to His words. Recollect *how* He taught. By metaphors, by images, by illustrations, boldly figurative, in rich variety—yes, in daring abundance. He calls Himself a gate, a king, a vine, a shepherd, a thief in the night. In every one of these He appeals to certain feelings and associations. What He says can only be interpreted by such associations. They must be understood by a living heart; a cold, clear intellect will make nothing of them. If you take those glorious expressions, pregnant with almost boundless thought, and lay them down as so many articles of rigid, stiff theology, you turn life into death. It is just as if a chemist were to analyze a fruit or a flower, and then imagine that he had told you what a fruit and a flower are. He separates them into their elements, names and numbers them; but those elements, weighed, measured, numbered in the exact proportions that made up the beautiful living thing, are not the living thing—no, nor anything like it. Your science is very profound, no doubt; but the fruit is crushed and the grace of the flower is gone.

WATER cannot coalesce with fire—water cannot mix with oil. If, then, humanity and divinity were united in the person of the Redeemer, it follows that there must be something kindred between the two, or else the Incarnation had been impossible. So that the Incarnation is the realization of man's perfection.

Now this is the universality of the nature of Jesus Christ. There was in Him no national peculiarity nor individual idiosyncrasy. He was not the Son of the Jew, nor the Son of the carpenter; nor the offspring of the modes of living and thinking of that particular century. He was the Son of Man. Once in the world's history was born a MAN. Once in the roll of ages, out of innumerable failures, from the stock of human nature, one bud developed itself into a faultless flower.

THE Redeemer not only was, but *is*, man. He *was* tempted in all points like us. He *is* a high priest which can be touched. Our conceptions on this subject, from being vague, are often very erroneous. It is fancied that in the history of Jesus' existence, once, for a limited period and for definite purposes, He took part in frail humanity; but that when that purpose was accomplished, the Man forever perished, and the Spirit reascended, to unite again with pure unmixed Deity. But Scripture has taken peculiar pains to give assurance of the continuance of His humanity. It has carefully recorded His resurrection. After that He passed through space from spot to spot; when He was in one place He was not in another. His body was sustained by the ordinary aliments—broiled fish and honeycomb. The prints of suffering were on Him. His recognitions were human still. Thomas and Peter were especially reminded of incidents before His death, and connected with His living interests. To Thomas He says, "Reach hither thy hand." To Peter, "Lovest thou me?"

And this typifies to us a very grand and important truth. It is this, if I may venture so to express myself—the truth of the human heart of God. We think of God as a Spirit, infinitely removed from and unlike the creatures He has made. But the truth is, man resembles God: all spirits, all

minds, are of the same family. The Father bears a likeness to the Son whom He has created. The mind of God is similar to the mind of man. Love does not mean one thing in man, and another thing in God.

THERE is a vague way of speaking of the Atonement, which does not realize the tender, affectionate, personal love by which that daily, hourly reconciliation is effected. The sympathy of Christ was not merely love of men in masses: He loved the masses, but he loved them because made up of individuals. He "had compassion on the multitude"; but He had also discriminating, special tenderness for erring Peter and erring Thomas. He felt for the despised lonely Zaccheus in his sycamore-tree. He compassionated the discomfort of His disciples. He mixed His tears with the stifled sobs by the grave of Lazarus. He called the abashed children to His side. Among the numbers, as He walked, He detected the individual touch of faith. "Master, the multitude throng thee, and sayest thou, *Who* touched me?" — "Somebody hath touched me."

THERE is but One, He in whom humanity was completely restored to the Divine image, Whose forgiveness and condemnation are exactly commensurate with God's.

Is it not true that the world's outcasts may be led by their very sin to Christ? It is no wonder to see a saddened sinner seeking in the disappointment and weariness of solitary age that which he rejected in the heat of youth. Why, even the world is not astonished when it sees the sinner become the saint. Of course, the world has its own sarcastic account to give. Dissipation leads to weariness, and weariness to satiety, and satiety to devotion, and so your great sinner becomes a great saint, and serves God when all his emotions are exhausted. Be it so. He who knew our nature well, knew that marvelous revolutions go on in the soul of a man whom the world counts lost. In our wildest wanderings there is sometimes a love, strong as a father's, tender as a mother's, watching over us, and bringing back the erring child again. Know you not the law of Nature? Have you never seen how out of chaos and fer-

ment Nature brings order again—life out of death, beauty out of corruption? Such, gainsay it who will, often is the history of the rise of saintliness and purity out of a disappointed, bruised and penitent spirit. When the life-hopes have become a wreck—when the cravings of the heart for keen excitement have been ministered to so abundantly as to leave nothing but loathing and self-reproach behind—when innocence of heart is gone—yes, even then—scoff who will—the voice of Him is heard, who so dearly purchased the right to say it: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

THE cause of man was the cause of Christ! He did no hireling work. The only pay He got was hatred, a crown of thorns, and the Cross.

It was not manhood, but humanity, that was made Divine in Him. Humanity has its two sides: one side in the strength and intellect of manhood; the other in the tenderness, and faith, and submissiveness of womanhood: Man and woman, not man alone, make up human nature. In Christ not one alone but both were glorified. Strength and grace, wisdom and love, courage and purity, Divine manliness, Divine womanliness. In all noble characters you find the two blended: in Him the noblest, blended into one entire and perfect humanity.

THERE was in Him the woman-heart as well as the manly brain—all that was most manly, and all that was most womanly. Remember what He was in life: recollect His stern, iron hardness in the temptation of the desert: recollect the calmness that never quailed in all the uproars of the people, the truth that never faltered, the strict, severe integrity which characterized the Witness of the Truth: recollect the justice that never gave way to weak feeling—which let the rich young ruler go his way to perish if he would—which paid the tribute-money—which held the balance fair between the persecuted woman and her accuser, but did not suffer itself to be betrayed by sympathy into any feeble tenderness—the justice that rebuked Peter with indignation, and pronounced the doom of Jerusalem un-

swervingly. Here is one side or pole of human character—surely not the feminine side. Now look at the other. Recollect the twice-recorded tears, which a man would have been ashamed to show, and which are never beautiful in man except when joined with strength like His: and recollect the sympathy craved and yearned for as well as given—the shrinking from solitude in prayer—the trembling of a sorrow unto death—the considerate care which provided bread for the multitude, and said to the tired disciples, as with a sister's rather than a brother's thoughtfulness, "Come ye apart into the desert and rest a while." This is the other side or pole of human character—surely not the masculine.

ONE there was in whom human nature was exhibited in all its elements symmetrically complete. One in whom, as I lately said, there met all that was manliest and all that was most womanly. His endurance of pain and grief was that of the woman rather than the man. A tender spirit dissolving into tears, meeting the dark hour not with the stern defiance of the man and the stoic, but with gentleness, and trust, and love, and shrinking, like a woman. But when it came to the question in Pilate's judgment-hall, or the mockeries of Herod's men of war, or the discussion with the Pharisees, or the exposure of the hollow falsehoods by which social, domestic and religious life were sapped, the woman has disappeared, and the hardy resolution of the man, with more than manly daring, is found in her stead.

THERE is no prescription for the sickness of the heart, but that which is written in the Redeemer's blood.

HE was here to restore that which was broken down and crumbling into decay. An enthusiastic antiquarian, standing amidst the fragments of an ancient temple surrounded by dust and moss, broken pillar and defaced architrave, with magnificent projects in his mind of restoring all this to *former* majesty, to draw out to light from mere rubbish the ruined glories, and therefore stooping down among the dank ivy and the rank nettles; such was Christ amidst the wreck of human nature. He was striving to lift it out of

its degradation. He was searching out in revolting places that which had fallen down, that He might build it up again in fair proportions, a holy temple to the Lord.

IF any one ever felt the beauty of this world, it was He. The beauty of the lily nestling in the grass—He felt it all; but the beauty which He exhibited in life was the stern loveliness of moral action. The King in His beauty “had no form or comeliness”; it was the beauty of obedience, of noble deeds, of unconquerable fidelity, of unswerving truth, of Divine self-devotion. The Cross! the Cross! We must have something of iron and hardness in our characters. The Cross tells us that is the true Beautiful which is Divine: an inward, not an outward beauty, which rejects and turns sternly away from the meretricious forms of the outward world.

THE Eternal Word whispered in the souls of men before it spoke articulately aloud in the Incarnation. It was the Divine Thought before it became the Divine Expression. It was the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, before it blazed into the Day-spring from on high which visited us. The mind of Christ, the spirit of the years yet future, blended itself with life before He came; for His words were the eternal verities of our humanity.

IF we would separate the world from sin, and from the penalty of sin, and the inward misery of the heart attendant on sin in this world and the world to come, it is written in Scripture, “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,” than the name of Jesus.

THE perfection of Christ's humanity implies that He was possessed of a human soul as well as a human body. There was a view held in early times, and condemned by the Church as a heresy, according to which the body of Christ was an external framework animated by Deity, as our bodies are animated by our souls. What the soul is to us, Deity was to Christ. His body was flesh, blood, bones—moved, guided, ruled by indwelling Divinity.

IF there has been on this earth no real, perfect human life, no love that never cooled, no faith that never failed, which may shine as a loadstar across the darkness of our experience, a light to light amidst all convictions of our own meanness and all suspicions of others' littleness, why, we may have a religion, but we have not a Christianity. For if we lose Him as a Brother, we cannot feel Him as a Saviour.

HE in whose heart the Law was, and who alone of all mankind was content to do it, His sacrifice alone can be the sacrifice all-sufficient in the Father's sight as the proper sacrifice of humanity: He who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, He alone can give the Spirit which enables us to present *our* bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. He is the only High priest of the universe.

THE coldest hour of all the night is that which immediately precedes the dawn, and in that darkest hour of Jerusalem's night her light beamed forth; her wisest and greatest came in the midst of her, almost unknown, born under the law, to emancipate those who were groaning under the law. His life, the day of His preaching, was Jerusalem's time of grace.

THE Son is the human side of the mind of God.

IN One alone has the Divine been so blended with the human, that, as the ocean mirrors every star and every tint of blue upon the sky, so was the earthly life of Christ the life of God on earth.

OIL and water could as easily blend as the mind of Christ with evil. Temptation glanced from His heart as the steel point does from the surface of the diamond. It was not that evil propensities were kept under by the power of the Spirit in Him:—He had no evil propensities at all. Obedience was natural to Him.

IN Christ God beholds humanity; in Christ He sees perfected every one in whom Christ's spirit exists in germ. He

to whom the possible is actual, to whom what will be already *is*, sees all things *present*, gazes on the imperfect, and sees it in its perfection.

THE way in which some speak of the sinlessness of Jesus reduces all His suffering to physical pain, destroys the reality of temptation, reduces that glorious heart to a pretense, and converts the whole of His history into a mere fictitious drama, in which scenes of trial were only represented, not really felt. Remember that, "in all points," the Redeemer's *soul* was tempted.

LOVE, mercy, tenderness, purity—these are no mere names when we see them brought out in the human actions of our Master. Holiness is only a shadow to our minds, till it receives shape and substance in the life of Christ. All this character of holiness is intelligible to us in Christ.

HE was the representative of God—of God under the limitations of humanity.

CHRIST came to call out all the principles and powers of human nature, to restore the natural equilibrium of all our faculties; not to call us back to our own individual selfish nature, but to human nature as it is in God's ideal—the perfect type which is to be realized in us.

CHRIST has broken down the middle wall of partition; He has revealed God as *Our* Father; proclaimed that there is no distinction in the spiritual family, and established a real Brotherhood on earth.

WE are redeemed by the life of God without us, manifested in the person of Christ, kindling into flame the life of God that is within us. Without Him we can do nothing. Without Him the warmth that was in Zaccheus' heart would have smouldered uselessly away. Through Him it became life and light, and the lost was saved.

THAT which is most deeply working in modern life and thought is the mind of Christ. His name has passed over

our institutions, and much more has His spirit penetrated into our social and domestic existence.

MEN of pleasure, whose hearts are as capable of an eternal blessedness as a Christian's, that is the terrible meaning and moral of your dissipation. God in Christ is your only Eden, and out of Christ you can have nothing but the restlessness of Cain.

THE life of Christ and the death of Christ must be made the law of our life. Reject that, and we reject our own salvation; and, in rejecting that, we bring on in rapid steps, for the nation and for ourselves, the day of judgment and of ruin.

IN the proper sense of the word, He was a victim. He did not adroitly wind through the dangerous forms of evil, meeting it with expedient silence. Face to face, and front to front, He met it, rebuked it, and defied it; and just as truly as he is a voluntary victim whose body, opposing the progress of the car of Juggernaut, is crushed beneath its monstrous wheels, was Christ a victim to the world's sin: because pure, He was crushed by impurity; because just and real and true, He waked up the rage of injustice, hypocrisy, and falsehood.

CHRISTIAN.

A LIVING character is impressed upon us: we are as the glass or mirror which reflects back a likeness, only we reflect it livingly; it does not pass away from us as the image does from the glass, but is an imparted life, which develops itself more and more within us: for Christ is not a mere example, but the life of the world; and the Christian is not a mere copy, but a living image of the living God.

HE is sanctified by the self-devotion of his Master from the world, who has a life in himself independent of the maxims and customs which sweep along with them other men. In his Master's words, "A well of water *in* him, springing up into everlasting life," keeping his life on the

whole pure, and his heart fresh. His true life is hid with Christ in God. His motives, the aims and objects of his life, however inconsistent they may be with each other, however irregularly or feebly carried out, are yet on the whole above, not here. His citizenship is in heaven. He may be tempted, he may err, he may fall, but still in his darkest aberrations there will be a something that keeps before him still the dreams and aspirations of his best days—a thought of the cross of Christ and the self-consecration that it typifies—a conviction that that is the highest, and that alone the true life. And that—if it were only that—would make him essentially different from other men, even when he mixes with them and seems to catch their tone, among them but not one of them. And that life within him is Christ's pledge that he shall be yet what he longs to be—a something severing him, separating him, consecrating him. For him and for such as him the consecration prayer of Christ was made. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world: Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

THE Christian must leave the world alone. His blessedness lies in quiet work with the Israel of God. His home is in that deep, unruffled tranquillity which belongs to those who are trying to know Christ.

REMEMBER Christian progress is only possible in Christ. It is a very lofty thing to be a Christian; for a Christian is a man who is restoring God's likeness to his character; and therefore the apostle calls it here a high calling. High as heaven is the calling wherewith we are called. But this very height makes it seem impracticable. It is natural to say, All that was well enough for one so transcendently gifted as Paul to hope for: but I am no gifted man; I have no iron strength of mind; I have no sanguine hopefulness of character; I am disposed to look on the dark side of things; I am undetermined, weak, vacillating; and then I have a whole army of passions and follies to contend with. We have to remind such men of one thing they have forgotten. It is the high calling of God, if you will; but it is the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. What the world

calls virtue, is a name and a dream without Christ. The foundation of all human excellence must be laid deep in the blood of the Redeemer's cross, and in the power of His Resurrection.

CHARACTER is an exceedingly delicate thing, that of a Christian man especially so. To a certain extent it is true, no doubt, that we must not be over-anxious as to the estimation in which we are held by others: it is true, no doubt, to a certain extent, that the character which cannot defend itself is not worth defending. And that it is better to live down evil reports. But if a character is never defended, it comes to be considered as incapable of defense, and besides we know that often many years are required to clear away suspicions, and then the vindication often comes too late for the maligned man.

TRUE Christian life is like the march of a conquering army into a fortress which has been breached; men fall by hundreds in the ditch. Was their fall a failure? Nay, for their bodies bridge over the hollow, and over them the rest pass on to victory. The quiet religious worship that we have this day — how comes it to be ours? It was purchased for us by the constancy of such men as John, who freely gave their lives. We are treading upon a bridge of martyrs. The suffering was theirs — the victory is ours.

IN Christ there is not given to us a faultless essay on the loveliness of self-consecration, to convince our reason how beautiful it is: but there is given to us a self-consecrated One: a living Truth, a living Person; a life that was beautiful, a death that we feel in our inmost hearts to have been divine: and all this in order that the Spirit of that consecrated life and consecrated death, through love, and wonder, and deep enthusiasm, may pass into us, and sanctify us also to the truth in life and death. He sacrificed Himself that we might offer *ourselves* a living sacrifice to God.

THE death and the life of Christ are to be manifested in our mortal body. We are to let things *come* as God pleases,

making both joy and sorrow divine, by infusing into them the Cross and the Resurrection. We are to show Christ forth in our lives till He comes. He is the sun; and Christian life is as the turning of the sunflower to the sun.

THE law of humanity in Christ is, that "they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them." Such is the Christian law of sacrifice: to present our bodies and souls to Christ as a living offering. It is no longer the law of nature which rules our life, no longer self-preservation, self-indulgence; but it is self-surrender toward God and toward man.

THE world is very keen-sighted: it looks through the excitement of your religious meetings, quietly watches the rest of your scandal, scans your consciousness, and the question which the world keeps putting pertinaciously is, Are these men in earnest? Is it any marvel if Christian unreality is the subject of scoffs and bitter irony?

SEE what a Christian is, drawn by the hand of Christ. He is a man on whose clear and open brow God has set the stamp of truth: one whose very eye beams bright with honor; in whose very look and bearing you may see freedom, manliness, veracity; a brave man—a noble man—frank, generous, true, with, it may be, many faults; whose freedom may take the form of impetuosity or rashness, but the form of meanness never. Young men, if you have been deterred from religion by its apparent feebleness and narrowness, remember, it is a manly thing to be a Christian.

CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY is a spirit—it is a set of principles, and not a set of rules.

THE truth which Christ taught was chiefly on these three points: God, man, immortality.

SETTLE it in your hearts: Christianity is Christ: understand Him, breathe His spirit, comprehend His mind:

Christianity is a life, a spirit. Let self die with Christ, and with Him rise to a life of holiness; and then, whether you are a minister or ministered to, you need not care what discussions may arise, nor how men may dispute your Christianity, or deny your share in the Gospel; you stand upon a rock.

THE Gospel threw light on God: light unknown before, even to the holiest hearts among the Jews. "Clouds and darkness are the habitation of His seat," spoke the Old Testament; "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," declared the New. For out of Christ our God is only a dark, dim and dreadful mystery. There is only an awful silence, which is never broken by an articulate voice. But all is brightness in the Redeemer's life and death.

THE Gospel threw light, too, upon man's own nature. Man — a dark enigma, a contradiction to himself, with God-like aspirations and animal cravings — asks his own heart in terror, "Am I a god or beast?" And the Gospel answers: "You are a glorious temple in ruins, to be rebuilt into a habitation of God and the Spirit, your soul to be the home of the High and Holy One, your body to be the temple of the Holy Ghost." It threw light upon the grave; for "life and immortality" were "brought to light through the Gospel." The darkness of the tomb was irradiated; and the things of that undiscovered land shone clear and tranquil then to the eye of faith: but not until *then*, for immortality before was but a mournful *perhaps*.

I COULD not tell you too strongly my own deep and deepening conviction that the truths which I teach are true. Every year they shed fresh light on one another, and seem to stretch into immensity. They explain to me life, God, and the Bible; and I am certain that what fresh light I shall receive will be an expansion and not a contradiction of what I have. As for the words in which I try to make others see what I see, they indeed are poor and bewildered enough. But there is no bewilderment in my mind, though much that is incomplete. The principles are rooted in human nature, God, and the being of things; and I find

them at the root of every page in Scripture. The *principles* cannot be reversed. My mind has grown by a regular development year by year, and I could as easily say that I doubt my own existence as doubt those truths which have grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength. They are not opinions nor theories, but convictions: part of my being, of my habits of thought and life, coloring everything, "the fountain light of all my day, the master light of all my seeing." These are the truths for which men go to the stake, and relinquish, joyfully, friends, sympathy, good name, worldly prospects. They do not depend upon the accuracy of an intellectual process, but upon the verdict of all the highest powers of soul.

THE language often used in our own day about an absolute Christianity, separate from the personality of Jesus Christ, is, after all, but a dream. Our Christianity is not merely the abstract truths which Christ taught, but Christ Himself, who lived, and died, and rose again for us, our Redeemer and our God.

THE celestial fire touched the hearts of men, and their hearts flamed; and it caught, and spread, and would not stop. On they went, that glorious band of brothers, in their strange enterprise, over oceans, and through forests, penetrating into the dungeon, and to the throne—to the hut of the savage feeding on human flesh, and to the shore lined with the skin-clad inhabitants of these far isles of Britain. Read the account given by Tertullian of the marvelous rapidity with which the Christians increased, and you are reminded of one of those vast armies of ants which moves across a country in irresistible myriads, drowned by thousands in rivers, cut off by fire, consumed by man and beast, and yet fresh hordes succeeding interminably to supply their place.

A new voice was heard: a new yearning upon earth; man pining at being severed from his brother, and longing to burst the false distinctions which had kept the best hearts from each other so long—an infant cry of life—the cry of the young church of God. And all this from Judea—the

narrowest, most bigoted, most intolerant nation on the face of the earth.

AND that which is the essential peculiarity of this Christianity lies in these two things. First of all, that the morality which it teaches is *disinterested* goodness—goodness not for the sake of the blessing that follows it, but for its own sake, and because it is right. “Love your enemies,” is the Gospel precept. Why?—Because if you love them you shall be blessed; and if you do not, cursed? No; but “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of”—that is, may be like—“your Father which is in heaven.” The second essential peculiarity of Christianity—and this, too, is an essential peculiarity of this sermon,—is that it teaches and enforces the law of self-sacrifice. “If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out; if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off.” This, brethren, is the law of self-sacrifice—the very law and spirit of the blessed cross of Christ.

THE charity of God, the sacrifice of Christ—these are the two grand, leading principles of the Gospel; and in some form or other you will find these lying at the roots of every profession and state of feeling in almost every age. But the form in which these appear will vary with all the gradations which are to be found between the lowest savage state and the highest and most enlightened Christianity. Many nations and ages have caricatured them—dislocated, perverted them.

WE hear the voice of God as it was once heard in the garden of Eden whispering among the leaves: every sound, once so discordant, becomes music, the anthem of creation raised up, as it were, with everlasting hallelujahs to the eternal throne. Then it is that a man first knows his immortality, and the soul knows what is meant by infinitude and eternity; not that infinitude which can be measured by miles, nor that eternity which can be computed by hours; but the eternity of emotion. Let a man breathe but one

hour of the charity of God, and feel but one true emotion of the reconciled heart, and then he knows forever what is meant by immortality, and he can understand the reality of his own.

CHRISTIANITY is the eternal religion which can never become obsolete. If it sets itself to determine the temporary and the local, the justice of this tax, or the exact wrongs of that conventional maxim, it would soon become obsolete; it would be the religion of one century, not of all. As it is, it commits itself to nothing except eternal *principles*.

Just as if the temperature of this northern hemisphere were raised suddenly, and a mighty tropical river were to pour its fertilizing inundation over the country, the result would be the impartation of a vigorous and gigantic growth to the vegetation already in existence, and at the same time the development of life in seeds and germs which had long lain latent in the soil, incapable of vegetation in the unkindly climate of their birth. Exactly in the same way the flood of a Divine life poured suddenly into the souls of men, enlarged and ennobled qualities which had been used already, and at the same time *developed* powers which never could have become apparent in the cold, low temperature of natural life.

THERE is a difference between the spirit of Judaism and that of Christianity. The spirit of Judaism is separation; that of Christianity is permeation. To separate the evil from the good was the aim and work of Judaism:—to sever one nation from all other nations, certain meats from other meat, certain days from other days. Sanctify means to set apart. The very essence of the idea of Hebrew holiness lay in sanctification in the sense of separation. On the contrary, Christianity is permeation: it permeates all evil with good; it aims at overcoming evil by good; it desires to transfuse the spirit of the day of rest into all other days, and to spread the holiness of one nation over all the world. To saturate life with God, and the world with heaven, that is the genius of Christianity.

CHRISTIANITY — opposed by the force of governments, counterfeited by charlatanism, sneered at by philosophers, cried down by frantic mobs, coldly looked at from a distance by the philosophical, pursued with unrelenting hatred by Judaism, met by unions and combinations of trades, having arrayed against it every bad passion of humanity — went swiftly on, conquering and to conquer.

CHRISTIANITY works from what is internal to what is external. It gave to the slave the feeling of his dignity as a man; at the same time it gave to the Christian master a new view of his relation to his slave, and taught him to regard him “not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved.”

His kingdom was one founded on spiritual disposition, not one of outward law and jurisprudence.

CHRISTIANITY is a revelation of the love of God — a demand of our love by God based thereon. Christianity is a revelation of Divine forgiveness — a requirement thereupon that we should forgive each other.

It is not conformity to a creed that is here required, but aspiration after a *state*. It is not demanded of us to perform a number of duties, but to yield obedience to a certain spiritual law.

It is a great privilege, too, to know that the Gospel is a system of resources by which we are to become purer and better day by day. It is a grand thing to be a Christian. It is a magnificent hope that we are ever to become partakers of the Divine Nature.

CHRISTIANITY is the regeneration of our whole nature, not the destruction of one atom of it.

PHILOSOPHY has become Christian; science has knelt to Christ.

CHURCH.

THE Church exists for the purpose of educating souls for heaven, but it would be a perversion of this purpose were we to think that goodness will not be received by God because it has not been educated in the Church. Goodness is goodness, find it where we may. A vineyard exists for the purpose of nurturing vines, but he would be a strange vine-dresser who denied the reality of grapes because they had ripened under a less genial soil, and beyond the precincts of the vineyard.

THE Church is the ideal of humanity. It represents what God intended man to be—what man is in God's sight as beheld in Christ by Him; and the minister of the Church speaks as the representative of that ideal humanity.

FROM the days of Cain and Abel there have been ever two classes, the oppressor and the oppressed; the gentle humble ones who refuse to right themselves, and the unscrupulous who force them aside. The Church has ever had the world against it. The world struck its first deadly blow by the hand of Cain, and it has been striking ever since: from the battle-field, and the martyr's stake, and the dungeons of the Inquisition, and the prisons of the lordly tyrant, the blood of the innocent has cried for vengeance.

WHEN we speak of the Church we generally mean a society to aid men in their progress Godward; but the Church of God is by no means coextensive in any age with that organized institution which we *call* the Church; sometimes it is nearly coextensive—that is, nearly all on earth who are born of God are found within its pale, nearly all who are of the world are extraneous to it; but sometimes the born of God have been found distinct from the institution called the Church—opposed to it, persecuted by it. The institution of the Church is a blessed ordinance of God, organized on earth for the purpose of representing the eternal Church, and of extending its limits, but still ever subordinate to it.

It is a Church most truly when it is most plainly devoted. Thus it was in martyr times, when the death and persecuted existence of the saints of God were at once the life-blood of the Church and a testimony to the truth of its Faith.

THE Church of God remains under fresh forms—the one, holy, entire family in heaven and earth.

CIVILIZATION.

CIVILIZATION does free: intellect equalizes. Every step of civilization is a victory over some lower instinct. But civilization contains within itself the elements of a fresh servitude. Man conquers the powers of nature, and becomes in turn their slave. The workman is in bondage to the machinery which does his will: his hours, his wages, his personal habits determined by it. The rich man fills his house with luxuries, and cannot do without them. A highly civilized community is a very spectacle of servitude. Man is there a slave to dress, to hours, to manners, to conventions, to etiquette. Things contrived to make his life more easy become his masters.

JESUS did not talk of the progress of the species nor the growth of civilization. He did not trust the world's hope of liberty to a right division of property. But he freed the inner man, that so the outer might become free too. "Ye shall know the truth, and the *truth* shall make you free."

CONFESSION.

THERE is something strengthening, something soothing, and at the same time something humbling, in acknowledging that we have done wrong. There is a pride in us which cannot bear pity. There is a diseased sensitiveness which shrinks from the smart of acknowledgment; and yet that smart must be borne before we can be truly soothed. When was it that the younger son in the parable received the ring, and the robe, and the banquet, which represent the rapture of the sense of being forgiven? When he had forti-

tude enough to go back, mile by mile, step by step, every inch of the way he had gone wrong, borne unflinchingly the sneer of his father's domestics, and, worse than all, the sarcasms of his immaculate brother, and manfully said, "Father, I have sinned." When was it that the publican went down *justified* to his house? When he said, even before a supercilious Pharisee, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" When did the royal delinquent hear the words, "The Lord hath also put away thy sin"? When he gave the sacrifice of his lips: "I have sinned before the Lord." And when did the church of Ephesus rise into the brightest model of a perfect church that has yet been exhibited on earth? After her converts had publicly come forward, burnt those manuscripts which were called "Ephesian letters" to the value of 50,000 pieces of silver, "confessed and showed their deeds." There is a profound truth in the popular anxiety that a murderer should confess before he dies. It is an instinctive feeling that a true death is better than a false life.

CONSCIENCE.

A MAN may unsettle the verdict of his intellect: it is at his peril that he tampers with the convictions of his conscience. Every opinion and view must remain an open question, freely to be tried with fresh light. But there are eternal truths of right and wrong, such as the plain moralities and instinctive decencies of social life, upon which it is perilous to argue.

SOME men write and speak as if the difference between the Christian and the worldly man was this, that in the one conscience is a self-reproaching hell, and in the other a self-congratulating heaven. Oh, brethren, is this the fact? Think you that the Christian goes home at night counting up the noble deeds done during the day, saying to himself, "Well done, good and faithful servant"? Brethren, that habit of looking forward to the future prevents all pride and self-righteousness, and makes our best and only rest and satisfaction to consist in contemplating the future which is bringing us nearer and nearer home. Our motto, therefore, must be that striking one of the Apostle Paul,

"Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

A FAULT has the power sometimes of distorting life till all seems hideous and unnatural. A man who has left his proper nature, and seems compelled to say and do things unnatural and in false show, who has thus become untrue to himself,—to him life and the whole universe becomes untrue. He can grasp nothing; he does not stand on fact; he is living as in a dream—himself a dream. All is ghastly, unreal, spectral. A burden is on him as of a nightmare. He moves about in nothingness and shadows, as if he were not. His own existence swiftly passing might seem a phantom life, were it not for the corroding pang of anguish in his soul, for that at least is real.

WHEN did you ever hear that conscience could be saved without a self-sacrifice? For the victory of the true lies not so much in winning the contest as in spreading spirit.

No man's conscience gets so seared by doing what is wrong unknowingly as by doing that which appears to be wrong to his conscience. The Jews' consciences did not get seared by their slaying the Canaanites, but they did become seared by their failing to do what appeared to them to be right. Therefore, woe to you if you do what others think right, instead of obeying the dictates of your own conscience; woe to you if you allow authority, or prescription, or fashion, or influence, or any other human thing, to interfere with that awful and sacred thing, responsibility. "Every man," said the apostle, "must give an account of himself to God."

CONSCIENCE, when it is healthy, ever speaks thus: "My transgression." It was not the guilt of them that tempted you—they have theirs; but each as a separate agent, his own degree of guilt. Yours is your own; the violation of your own and not another's sense of duty; solitary, awful,

unshared, adhering to you alone of all the spirits of the universe.

THE conscience of man is a holy, sacred thing. The worst of crimes is to injure a human conscience. Better kill the body. Remember how strongly Saint Paul speaks: "When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." And that sin, remember, consisted in leading them to do a thing which, though right in itself, they thought wrong.

MANY a man, whose heart swells with what he thinks pious horror when he sees the letter delivered or the train run upon the Sabbath-day, can pass through the streets at night undepressed and unshocked by the evidences of the wide-spreading profligacy which has eaten deep into his country's heart.

BETTER support the wrong cause conscientiously than the right one insincerely. Better be a true man on the side of wrong than a false man on the side of right.

YOU cannot manufacture a conscience out of expediency: the voice of conscience says not, "It is better not do so," but "Thou shalt not."

COURAGE.

HE who feels his soul's dignity, knowing what he is and who, redeemed by God the Son, and freed by God the Spirit, cannot cringe, nor pollute himself, nor be mean.

THERE have been men like John the Baptist, who could speak the truth which had made their own spirits free, with the axe above their neck. There have been men, redeemed in their inmost being by Christ, on whom tyrants and mobs have done their worst, and who when, like Stephen, the stones crashed in upon their brain, or when their flesh hissed and crackled in the flames, were calmly superior to it all. The power of evil had laid its shackles on the flesh, but the mind and the soul and the heart were free.

THE Christian spirit is totally distinct from that of stoicism or mere manliness. It is one thing to bow to fate, and another to bow to God; it is one thing to submit because we must, and another because we ought. Perhaps there is nothing in the whole range of human history so sublime as the Stoic's defiance of pain; but this is not the Spirit of Christ. All honor to courage; at the least it is unselfish, while cowardice is selfishness. The sailor who cuts out the ship under the fire of the enemy's batteries, is noble; the North American Indian suffering torture without a single groan; the man who has a vulture-sorrow gnawing at his heart, but who goes on with a stern defiance—a godlike indifference to the thing which is preying upon his very life—is sublime and grand; but the spirit of the Indian is one thing and the Spirit of Christ another. The man who with closed teeth in his own room can resolve that no extremity of suffering shall wring from him one groan is manly; but manliness is not blessedness. He only can rejoice in infirmities, in reproaches, in suffering, who, taking the cup gently, lovingly, humbly into his hand, can drain it to the dregs, and say, as did his Master, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

COURTESY.

COURTESY is not confined to the high-bred; often theirs is but the artistic imitation of courtesy. The peasant who rises to put before you his only chair, while he sits upon the oaken chest, is a polite man. Motive determines everything. If we are courteous merely to substantiate our claims to mix in good society, or exhibit good manners chiefly to show that we have been in it,—this is a thing indeed to smile at: contemptible, if it were not rather pitiable. But that politeness which springs spontaneously from the heart, the desire to put others at their ease, to save the stranger from a sensation of awkwardness, to soothe the feeling of inferiority,—that, ennobled as it is by love, mounts to the high character of a heavenly grace.

COVETOUSNESS.

CONSIDER somewhat more deeply this covetousness. In the original the word is a very expressive one. It means the desire of having more—not of having more because there is not enough, but simply a craving after more. More when a man has not enough. More when he has. More, more, ever more. Give, give. Divide, divide.

THIS desire of accumulation is the source of all our greatness, and all our baseness. It is at once our glory and our shame. It is the cause of our commerce, of our navy, of our military triumphs, of our enormous wealth, and our marvelous inventions. And it is the cause of our factions and animosities, of our squalid pauperism, and the worse than heathen degradation of the masses of our population.

CROSS.

CHRISTIANITY teaches it in the *person* of Christ. The Cross is an abstraction until clothed in flesh and blood. Go and talk like a philosopher to one in suffering: you get an acknowledgment of your effort, but you have not soothed the sufferer. But go and tell him of the law *in Christ*; tell him that *He* has borne the Cross; and there is the peculiar Christian feeling of comfort, with all its tenderness, humanity, and *personality*. The law of the Cross is the truth, the rock truth, but only in a person. And hence comes the hymned feeling—how much more living than a philosophy!

“Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in *Thee*.”

So it is that in the mere word *cross* there is that sentiment which no other word in the English language can supply. Law of self-sacrifice? No: that is cold, not dear to us, personal, living, like the Cross.

OUR polar star is the love of the cross. Take the eye off that, and you are in darkness and bewilderment at once. Let us not mind what is past. Perhaps it is all failure, and useless struggle, and broken resolves. What then? Settle

this first, brethren, Are you in earnest? If so, though your faith be weak and your struggles unsatisfactory, you may begin the hymn of triumph *now*, for victory is pledged. "Thanks be to God, which"—not *shall* give, but—"giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

HIS second exclamation was, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" We will not dive into the deep mysteries of that expression—we will not pretend to be wiser than what is written, endeavoring to comprehend where the human is mingled with the Divine—we will take the matter simply as it stands. It is plain from this expression that the Son of God *felt* as if He had been deserted by His Father. We know that He was not deserted by Him, or else God had denied Himself, after saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And they who maintain that this was real desertion, attribute that to the Lord of Love which can alone belong to Judas—the desertion of innocence; therefore we conclude that it arose from the infirmities of our Master's innocent human nature. It was the darkening of His human soul, not the hiding of God's countenance. He was worn, faint, and exhausted; His body was hanging from four lacerated wounds; and more than that, there was much to perplex the Redeemer's human feelings, for He was suffering there, the innocent for the guilty. For once God's law seemed reversed; and then came the human cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

THERE is no doubt of what God means in the Cross: He means love,—the measure of the meaning of man's existence. Measure all by the Cross. Do you want success? The Cross is failure. Do you want a name? The Cross is infamy. Is it to be gay and happy that you live? The Cross is pain and sharpness. Do you live that the will of God may be done—in you and by you, in life and death? Then, and only then, the Spirit of the Cross is in you. When once a man has learned that, the power of the world is gone; and no man need bid him, in denunciation or in invitation, not to love the world. He cannot love the world, for he has got an ambition above the world. He has planted

his foot upon the Rock, and when all else is gone he at least abides forever.

WE degrade His life and death by pictures of His physical suffering and His bodily agony on the Cross. For it was not the nails that pierced His hands which wrung from Him the exceeding bitter cry, but the iron that had entered into His soul.

THE Cross is humbleness, love, self-surrender. These the apostle preached. To conquer the world by loving it—to be blessed by ceasing the pursuit of happiness, and sacrificing life instead of finding it—to make a hard lot easy by submitting to it: this was his divine philosophy of life. And the princes of this world, amidst scoffs and laughter, replied, Is that all? Nothing to dazzle—nothing to captivate. But the disciples of the inward life recognized the Divine Truth which this doctrine of the Cross contained. The humble of heart and the loving felt that in this lay the mystery of life, of themselves, and of God, all revealed and plain. It was God's own wisdom, felt by those who had the mind of Christ.

WHEN the law of the Cross is the law of our being—when we have learnt to surrender ourselves—then, and then only, we are free from all things: they are ours, not we theirs: we use them, instead of being crushed by them. The Christian is "creation's heir." He may say triumphantly, "The world, the world is mine."

STRUGGLE to the Cross, even though it be struggling as in chains. Just as on a day of clouds, when you have watched the distant hills, dark and gray with mist, suddenly a gleam of sunshine passing over reveals to you, in that flat surface, valleys and dells and spots of sunny happiness, which slept before unsuspected in the fog, so in the gloom of penitential life there will be times when God's deep peace and love will be felt shining into the soul with supernatural refreshment. Let the penitent be content with the servant's lot at first. Liberty and peace, and the bounding sensations of a Father's arms around you, come afterward.

DEATH.

No man who thinks can call it a trifling thing to die. True thoughtfulness must shrink from death without Christ. There is a world of untold sensations crowded into that moment when a man puts his hand to his forehead and feels the damp upon it, which tells him his hour is come. He has been waiting for death all his life, and now it is come. It is all over—his chance is past, and his eternity is settled. None of us know, except by guess, what that sensation is. Myriads of human beings have felt it to whom life was dear; but they never spoke out their feelings, for such things are untold. And to every individual man throughout all eternity that sensation in its fullness can come but once.

WE die alone. We go on our dark, mysterious journey for the first time in all our existence, without one to accompany us. Friends are beside our bed; they must stay behind.

It is a Christian's privilege to have victory over the fear of death. And here it is exceedingly easy to paint what, after all, is only the image-picture of a dying hour. It is the easiest thing to represent the dying Christian as a man who always sinks into the grave full of hope, full of triumph, in the certain hope of a blessed resurrection. Brethren, we must paint things in the sober colors of truth; not as they might be supposed to be, but as they are. Often that is only a picture. Either very few death-beds are Christian ones, or else triumph is a very different thing from what the word generally implies. Solemn, subdued, full of awe and full of solemnity, is the dying hour generally of the holiest men: sometimes almost darkness. Rapture is a rare thing, except in books and scenes.

Let us understand what really is the victory over fear. It may be rapture, or it may not. All that depends very much on temperament; and after all the broken words of a dying man are a very poor index of his real state before God. Rapturous hope has been granted to martyrs in peculiar moments. It is on record of a minister of our

own Church, that his expectation of seeing God in Christ became so intense as his last hour drew near, that his physician was compelled to bid him calm his transports, because in so excited a state he could not die. A strange unnatural energy was imparted to his muscular frame by his nerves overstrung with triumph. But, brethren, it fosters a dangerous feeling to take cases like those as precedents. It leads to that most terrible of all unrealities—the acting of a death-bed scene. A Christian conqueror dies calmly. Brave men in battle do not boast that they are not afraid. Courage is so natural to them that they are not conscious they are doing anything out of the common way—Christian bravery is a deep, calm thing, unconscious of itself. There are more triumphant death-beds than we count, if we only remember this—true fearlessness makes no parade.

Oh, it is not only in those passionate effusions in which the ancient martyrs spoke sometimes of panting for the crushing of their limbs by the lions in the amphitheater, or of holding out their arms to embrace the flames that were to curl round them—it is not then only that Christ has stood by His servants, and made them more than conquerors: there may be something of earthly excitement in all that. Every day His servants are dying modestly and peacefully—not a word of victory on their lips; but Christ's deep triumph in their hearts—watching the slow progress of their own decay, and yet so far emancipated from personal anxiety that they are still able to think and to plan for others, not knowing that they are doing any great thing. They die, and the world hears nothing of them; and yet theirs was the completest victory. They came to the battlefield, the field to which they had been looking forward all their lives, and the enemy was not to be found. There was no foe to fight with.

ONE of the saddest spectacles is the decay of the natural man before the work of the Spirit has been accomplished in him. When the savage dies—when a mere infant dies—when an animal dies—there is nothing that is appalling or depressing there; but when the high, the developed intellect—when the cultivated man comes to the last hours of life, and the memory becomes less powerful, and the

judgment fails, and all that belongs to nature and to earth visibly perishes, and the higher life has not been yet developed, though it is destined to survive the grave forever — even the life of God — there is here ample cause for grief; and it is no wonder that the man of genius merely should shed tears at the idea of decaying life.

THAT unutterable thing which we call our being — the idea of parting with it is agony.

It is no matter of uncertainty to any one of us whether he himself shall die. He knows it. Every time the funeral bell tolls, the thought in some shape suggests itself, I am a mortal, dying man. That is knowing it. Which of us has realized it? Who can shut his eyes, and bring it before him as a reality, that the day will come when the hearse will stand at the door for him, and that all this bright world will be going on without him; and that the very flesh which now walks about so complacently will have the coffin-lid shut down upon it, and be left to darkness, and loneliness, and silence, and the worm?

THE dying scene is worth little — little, at least, to us — except so far as it is in harmony with the rest of life.

ALL that is human drops from us in that hour. Human faces flit and fade, and the sounds of the world become confused. "I shall die alone" — yes, and alone you live. The philosopher tells us that no atom in creation touches another atom — they only approach within a certain distance; then the attraction ceases, and an invisible something repels — they only *seem* to touch. No soul touches another soul except at one or two points; and those chiefly external — a fearful and a lonely thought, but one of the truest of life. Death only realizes that which has been the fact all along. In the central deeps of our being we are alone.

Does your friend really think that the certainty of death in six months would not sound to her like a knell? Oh, no; be sure few really wish for death. Bad as life is, it is in

the power of a single dream to make us feel that it is not death we long for:

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant;
More life and fuller, that we want;
No heart in which was healthful breath,
Has ever truly longed for death.

WHEN a guilty man begins to think of dying, it is like a vision of the Son of Man presenting itself and calling out the voices of all the unclean spirits in the man—"Art thou come to torment us before the time?"

You must die. The day will come, and the coffin. Life in God alone robs that thought of dreadfulness: when the resurrection being begun within, you can look upon the decay of the outward man, and feel, I am not dying.

He is at rest, I doubt not, now—in that deep, awful rest which is the most endearing of all the attributes of the life that shall be—the rest which is order instead of disorder—harmony instead of chaotic passions in jar and discord, and duty instead of the conflict of self-will with His loving will. It is a noble thought, and I never hear of any one who has probably attained it without a feeling of congratulation rising to the lips.

JUST as we go to rest in this world tired, and wake up fresh and vigorous in the morning, so does the Christian go to sleep in the world's night, weary with the work of life, and then on the resurrection day he wakes in his second and his brighter morning.

THE last form in which a Christian gets the victory over death is by means of his resurrection. It seems to have been this which was chiefly alluded to by the apostle here; for he says, "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption . . . *then* shall come to pass the saying which is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." And to say the truth, brethren, it is a rhetorical expression rather than a sober truth when we call anything, except the resurrection, victory over death. We may conquer doubt and fear

when we are dying, but that is not conquering death. It is like a warrior crushed to death by a superior antagonist refusing to yield a groan, and bearing the glance of defiance to the last. You feel that he is an unconquerable spirit, but he is not the conqueror. And when you see flesh melting away, and mental power becoming infantine in its feebleness, and lips scarcely able to articulate, is there left one moment a doubt upon the mind as to *who* is the conqueror, in spite of all the unshaken fortitude there may be? The victory is on the side of death, not on the side of the dying.

"It is finished." We are *ever* taking leave of something that will not come back again. We let go, with a pang, portion after portion of our existence. However dreary we may have felt life to be here, yet when that hour comes — the winding up of all things, the last grand rush of darkness on our spirits, the hour of that awful sudden wrench from all we have ever known or loved, the long farewell to sun, moon, stars and light — brother men, I ask you this day, and I ask myself, humbly and fearfully, *What* will then be finished? When it is finished, what will it be? Will it be the butterfly existence of pleasure, the mere life of science, a life of uninterrupted sin and selfish gratification; or will it be, "Father, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do?"

EARNESTNESS.

EARNESTNESS: that is sincerity of purpose.

If we are not in earnest, difficulties will discourage us. Because will is wanting, we shall be asking still in ignorance and doubt, What is truth?

THE one difficulty in life is to be in earnest. All this world in the gala-day seems but a passing, unreal show. We dance, light-hearted, along the ways of existence, and nothing tells us that the earth is hollow to our tread. But soon some deep grief comes, and shocks us into reality; the solid earth rocks beneath our feet: the awfulness of life

meets us face to face in the desert. Then the value of things is seen; then it is that godly sorrow produces carefulness; then it is that, like Jacob, we cry, "How awful is this place! how solemn is this life! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" Then it is that with moral earnestness we set forth, walking circumspectly, weighing, with a watchful and sober eye, all the acts and thoughts which make up life.

ETERNITY is crying out to you louder and louder as you near its brink, Rise, be going: count your resources: learn what you are not fit for, and give up wishing for it: learn what you *can* do, and do it with the energy of a man.

EDUCATION.

THE mind of man left to itself is unproductive: alone in the wild woods he becomes a savage. Taken away from school early, and sent to the plough, the country boy loses by degrees that which distinguishes him from the cattle that he drives, and over his very features and looks the low animal expressions creep. Mind is necessary for mind. The mediatorial system extends through all God's dealings with us. The higher man is the mediator between God and the lower man: only through man can man receive development.

THE educated man, in proportion to his education, sees the number of laws diminished—beholds in the manifold appearances of nature the expression of a few laws, by degrees fewer, till at last it becomes possible to his conception that they are all reducible to one, and that that which lies beneath the innumerable phenomena of nature is the One Spirit—God.

KNOWLEDGE is power, power for good and evil. It is a power that may elevate a man by degrees up to an affinity with his Maker: it is a power that may bring him by degrees down to the level even of Satanic evil. Increased mental power will be the result of this plan; possibly that power will be devoted to bad purposes in many instances: it may become what it is not meant to be, the engine of some political party.

THERE are men who seem to be born intellectual heroes; men born to cut their way through any obstacles; men who only require to meet difficulties in their way, and those difficulties will be surmounted. They are like the trees on the mountain, that require no more than a bare covering of soil on the rock to strike their roots firmly down; nothing more than the clear, serene, thin air of heaven to throw abroad their branches in. These are intellectual giants; and they would acquire knowledge under any circumstances; it is impossible to crush them.

LIFE is very short; and the painter must not hope to be a good seaman; nor is the clergyman to pine because he cannot be the man of literature.

Talent forms itself in solitude,
Character in the storms of life.

The soul collects its mightiest forces by being thrown in upon itself, and coerced solitude often matures the mental and moral character marvelously, as in Luther's confinement in the Wartburg. Or, to take a loftier example, Paul during his three years in Arabia; or, grander still, His solitude in the desert: the Baptist's, too. But, on the other hand, solitude unbroken, from earliest infancy, or with nothing to sharpen the mind, either by collision with other minds, or the expectation of some new sphere of action shortly, would, I suppose, rust the mental energies. Still there is the spirit to be disciplined, humbled, and strengthened, and it may gain in proportion as the mind is losing its sharpening education.

EMOTION.

THERE are some men whose affections are stronger than their understandings: they feel more than they think. They are simple, trustful, able to repose implicitly on what is told them—liable sometimes to verge upon credulity and superstition; but take them all in all, perhaps the happiest class of minds: for it is happy to be without misgivings about the love of God and our own eternal rest in Him. "Blessed," said Christ to Thomas, "are they that have believed."

WHAT is your religion? Excitability, romance, impression, fear? Remember, excitement has its uses, impression has its value. John, in all circumstances of his appearance and style of teaching, impressed by excitement. Excitement, warmed feelings, make the first actings of religious life and the breaking of inveterate habits easier. But excitement and impression are not religion.

THE highest moment known on earth by the merely natural, is that in which the mysterious union of heart with heart is felt. Call it friendship—love—what you will, that mystic blending of two souls in one, when self is lost and found again in the being of another, when, as it were moving about in the darkness and loneliness of existence, we suddenly come in contact with something, and we find that spirit has touched spirit. This is the purest, serenest ecstasy of the merely human—more blessed than any sight that can be presented to the eye, or any sound that can be given to the ear; more sublime than the sublimest dream ever conceived by genius in its most gifted hour, when the freest way was given to the shaping spirit of imagination.

ETERNITY.

TIME stretches back immeasurably, but it also stretches on and on forever.

THE great idea brought out by Christianity was the eternity of the soul's life.

If every other trace of Deity has been expunged by the fall, these two, at least, defy destruction—the thought of eternal time, and the thought of immeasurable space.

YOUR questions about eternity and a future state puzzle me. Time is but (to us) the succession of ideas, long or short, as they are few or many; and eternity, as we use the word, means nothing more than the endlessness of this succession. The distinction made by religious people between eternity and time is an unthinking one. Eternity seems to me a word expressive of a negation; it does but deny a

termination to that mental state which we call time, for time is a subjective thing; existing, that is, in us, not externally to us—a mode of our being.

ETERNITY means nothing by itself. It merely expresses the existence of the high and lofty One that inhabiteth it. We make a fanciful distinction between eternity and time; there is no real distinction. We are in eternity at this moment. That has begun to be with us which never began with God. Our only measure of time is by the succession of ideas. If ideas flow fast, and many sights and many thoughts pass by us, time seems lengthened. If we have the simple routine of a few engagements, the same every day, with little variety, the years roll by us so fast that we cannot mark them. It is not so with God. There is no succession of ideas with Him. Every possible idea is present with Him now. It was present with Him ten thousand years ago. God's dwelling-place is that eternity which has neither past nor future, but one vast, immeasurable present.

EXAMPLE.

DISTINGUISH between a model and an example. You copy the outline of a model: you imitate the spirit of an example. Christ is our example: Christ is not our model. You might copy the life of Christ: make Him a model in every act: and yet you might be not one whit more of a Christian than before. You might wash the feet of poor fishermen as He did, live a wandering life with nowhere to lay your head. You might go about teaching, and never use any words but His words, never express a religious truth except in Bible language; have no home, and mix with publicans and harlots: then Christ would be your model. You would have copied His life like a picture, line for line, and shadow for shadow; yet you might not be Christ-like.

On the other hand, you might imitate Christ, get His Spirit, breathe the atmosphere of thought which He breathed: do not one single act which He did, but every act in His spirit: you might be rich, whereas He was poor: never teach, whereas He was teaching always: lead a life

in all outward particulars the very contrast and opposite of His; and yet the spirit of his self-devotion might have saturated your whole being, and penetrated into the life of every act and the essence of every thought. Then Christ would have become your example; for we can only imitate that of which we have caught the spirit.

A MAN so thoroughly above human resentment, human passions, human weakness, does not seem to us an example. The nearer humanity approaches a perfect standard, the less does it command our sympathy. A man must be weak before we can feel encouraged to attempt what he has done. It is not the Redeemer's sinlessness, nor His unconquerable fidelity to duty, nor His superhuman nobleness, that win our desire to imitate; rather His tears at the grave of friendship, His shrinking from the sharpness of death, and the feeling of human doubt which swept across His soul like a desolation. These make Him one of us, and therefore our example.

EXCITEMENT.

THE value of excitement is, that it breaks up the old mechanical life which has become routine. It stirs the stagnancy of our existence, and causes the stream of life to flow more fresh and clear. The danger of excitement is the probability of reaction. The heart, like the body and the mind, cannot be long exposed to extreme tension without giving way afterward. Strong impressions are succeeded by corresponding listlessness.

EXCITEMENT is the natural reward of toil; but that is a healthy excitement. Felt by the philosopher, it is delicious, calm, and productive of valuable productions; but felt without mental or physical effort, ending in itself, and existing only for the sake of itself, it is, by a just law, self-destructive; just as spirits may be safely taken during hard exercise, but at the peril of him who takes them in a sedentary life.

FAITH.

THERE is nothing in all this world that ever led man on to real victory but faith. Faith is that looking forward to a future with something like certainty that raises man above the narrow feelings of the present. Even in this life he is a greater man, a man of more elevated character, who is steadily pursuing a plan that requires some years to accomplish, than he who is living by the day. Look forward but ten years, and plan for it, live for it; there is something of manhood, something of courage required to conquer the thousand things that stand in your way. And therefore it is that faith, and nothing but faith, gives victory in death. It is that elevation of character which we get from looking steadily and forever forward till eternity becomes a real home to us, that enables us to look down upon the last struggle, and the funeral and the grave, not as the great end of all, but only as something that stands between us and the end. We are conquerors of death when we are able to look beyond it.

FAITH in religion is the same principle as faith in worldly matters, differing only in its object: it rises through successive stages. When, in reliance upon your promise, your child gives up the half-hour's idleness of to-day for the holiday of to-morrow, he lives by faith: a future supersedes the present pleasure. When he abstains from over-indulgence of the appetite, in reliance upon your word that the result will be pain and sickness, sacrificing the present pleasure for fear of future punishment, he acts on faith: I do not say that this is a high exercise of faith — it is a very low one,— but it is faith.

THERE is a power in the soul, quite separate from the intellect, which sweeps away or recognizes the marvelous, by which God is felt. Faith stands serenely far above the reach of the atheism of science. It does not rest on the wonderful, but on the eternal wisdom and goodness of God. The revelation of the Son was to proclaim a Father, not a mystery. No science can sweep away the everlasting love which the *heart* feels, and which the intellect does not even

pretend to judge or recognize. And he is safe from the inevitable decay which attends the mere barbarian worship who has felt that as faith is the strongest power in the mind of man, so is love the divinest principle in the bosom of God: in other words, he who adores God as known in Christ, rather than trembles before the Unknown — whose homage is yielded to Divine Character rather than to Divine Power.

RELIGIOUS faith ever dreams of something higher, more beautiful, more perfect, than the state of things with which it feels itself surrounded. Ever a day-future lies before it; the evidence for which is its own hope. Abraham, by that creative faith, saw the day of Christ and was glad. Joseph saw his family in prosperity, even in affluence; but he felt that this was not their rest. A higher life than that of affluence, a nobler destiny than that of stagnant rest, there must be for them in the future, else all the anticipations of a purer earth and a holier world, which imagination bodied forth within his soul, were empty dreams, not the intuitions of God's Spirit. It was this idea of perfection, which was "the substance of things hoped for," that carried him far beyond the period of his own death and made him feel himself a partaker of his nation's blessed future.

CHILD of God, if you would have your thought of God something beyond a cold feeling of His presence, let faith *appropriate* Christ. You are as much the object of God's solicitude as if none lived but yourself. He has counted the hairs of your head. In Old Testament language, "He has put your tears into His bottle." He has numbered your sighs and your smiles. He has interpreted the desires for which you have not found a name nor an utterance yourself. If you have not learned to say "*My Redeemer*," then just so far as there is anything tender or affectionate in your disposition, you will tread the path of your pilgrimage with a darkened and a lonely heart; and when the day of trouble comes there will be none of that triumphant elasticity which enabled Job to look down, as from a rock, upon the surges which were curling their crests of fury at his feet, but could only reach his bosom with their spent spray.

THERE is a grand fearlessness in faith. He who in his heart of hearts reverences the good, the true, the holy—that is, reverences God—does not tremble at the apparent success of attacks upon the outworks of his faith. They may shake those who rested on those outworks—they do not move him whose soul reposes on the truth itself. He needs no props or crutches to support his faith. He does not need to multiply the objects of his awe in order to keep dreadful doubt away. Founded on a Rock, Faith can afford to gaze undismayed at the approaches of infidelity.

To believe is to be happy; to doubt is to be wretched. But I will not urge that. Seventy years—and the most fevered brain will be still enough. We will not say much of the wretchedness of doubt. To believe is to be *strong*. Doubt cramps energy. Belief is power. Only so far as a man believes strongly, mightily, can he act cheerfully, or do anything that is worth the doing.

THE faith of Thomas was not merely satisfaction about a fact,—it was trust in a person. The admission of a fact, however sublime, is not faith: we may believe that Christ is risen, yet not be nearer heaven. It is a Bible fact that Lazarus rose from the grave, but belief in Lazarus' resurrection does not make the soul better than it was. Thomas passed on from the fact of the resurrection to the person of the risen: "My Lord, and my God." Trust in the risen Saviour—that was the belief which saved his soul.

FAITH is that strong, buoyant confidence in God and in His love which gives energy and spirit to do right without doubt or despondency. Where God sees that, He sees the spring and fountain out of which all good springs: He sees, in short, the very life of Christ begun, and he reckons that to be righteousness; just as a small perennial fountain in Gloucestershire is the Thames, though it is yet scarcely large enough to float a schoolboy's boat; and just as you call a small seedling, not bigger than a little almond peeping above the ground, an oak: for the word "justify" means not to be made righteous, but to reckon or account righteous.

To feel faith is the grand difficulty of life. Faith is a deep impression of God and God's love, and personal trust in it. It is easy to say "Believe, and thou shalt be saved," but well we know it is easier said than done. We cannot say how men are to *get* faith. It is God's gift, almost in the same way that genius is. You cannot work *for* faith; you must have it first, and then work *from* it.

By faith we are justified. By faith man removes mountains of difficulty. The divinest attribute in the heart of God is love, and the mightiest, because the most human, principle in the breast of man is faith. Love is heaven, faith is that which appropriates heaven.

FAITH ought ever to be a sanguine, cheerful thing; and perhaps in practical life we could not give a better account of faith than by saying that it is, amidst much failure, having the heart to *try again*. Our best deeds are marked by imperfection; but if they really were our best, "forget the things that are behind,"—we shall do better next time.

FAITH is a theological term rarely used in other matters. Hence its meaning is obscured. But faith is no strange, new, peculiar power, supernaturally infused by Christianity, but the same principle by which we live from day to day—one of the commonest in our daily life.

A LIFE of religion is a life of faith; and faith is that strange faculty by which man feels the presence of the invisible,—exactly as some animals have the power of seeing in the dark. That is the difference between the Christian and the world.

FAITH does not create a child of God any more than baptism, nor does it make a fact. It only appropriates that which is a fact already.

FAITH is trust. Trust is dependence on another; the spirit which is opposite to independence or trust in self. Hence where the spirit of proud independence is, faith is not.

FAMILY.

NEVER more than in the family is the true entirety of our nature seen. Observe how all the diversities of human condition and character manifest themselves in the family.

First of all, there are the two opposite poles of masculine and feminine, which contain within them the entire of our humanity—which together, not separately, make up the whole of man. Then there are the diversities in the degrees and kinds of affection. For when we speak of family affection we must remember that it is made up of many diversities. There is nothing more different than the love which the sister bears toward the brother, compared with that which the brother bears toward the sister. The affection which a man bears toward his father is quite distinct from that which he feels toward his mother; it is something quite different toward his sister; totally diverse, again, toward his brother.

And then there are diversities of character. First, the mature wisdom and stern integrity of the father; then the exuberant tenderness of the mother. And then one is brave and enthusiastic, another thoughtful, and another tender. One is remarkable for being full of rich humor, another is sad, mournful, even melancholy. Again, besides these, there are diversities of condition in life. First, there is the heir, sustaining the name and honor of the family; then perchance the soldier, in whose career all the anxiety and solicitude of the family is centered; then the man of business, to whom they look up, trusting his advice, expecting his counsel; lastly, perhaps, there is the invalid, from the very cradle trembling between life and death, drawing out all the sympathies and anxieties of each member of the family, and so uniting them all more closely, from their having one common point of sympathy and solicitude. Now you will observe that these are not accidental, but absolutely essential to the idea of a family; for so far as any one of them is lost, so far the family is incomplete. A family made up of one sex alone, all brothers and no sisters; or in which all are devoted to one pursuit; or in which there is no diversity of temper and dispositions—the same monotonous repeated identity—a sameness in the type of character,—this is not a family, it is only the fragment of a family.

It is possible for men to live in the same house, and partake of the same meal from day to day, and from year to year, and yet remain strangers to each other, mistaking each other's feelings, not comprehending each other's character; and it is only when the Atlantic rolls between, and half a hemisphere is interposed, that we learn how dear they are to us, how all our life is bound up in deep anxiety with their existence. Therefore it is the Christian feels that the family is not broken.

A FAMILY is built on affinities which are natural, not artificial; it is not a combination, but a society.

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Who has not felt the load taken from his mind when the hidden guilt over which he had brooded long has been acknowledged, and met by forgiving human sympathy, especially at a time when he expected to be treated with coldness and reproof? Who has not felt how such a moment was to him the dawn of a better hope, and how the merciful judgment of some wise and good human being seemed to be the type and the assurance of God's pardon, making it credible.

IN Christ humanity was the perfect type of Deity, and therefore Christ's absolution was always the exact measure and counterpart of God's forgiveness. Herein lies the deep truth of the doctrine of His eternal priesthood—the Eternal Son—the humanity of the being of God—the ever-human mind of God.

SETTLE it in your minds, the absolving power is the central secret of the Gospel. Salvation is unconditional; not an offer, but a *gift*; not clogged with conditions, but free as the air we breathe. God welcomes back the prodigal. God loves without money and without price. To this men reply gravely, It is dangerous to speak thus; it is perilous to dispense with the safeguards of restriction. Law! law! there is nothing like law—a salutary fear—for making men holy. O blind Pharisee! had you ever known the spring, the life which comes from feeling *free*, the gush of gratitude with

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WITH God there is no Time—it is one eternal Now. This is made conceivable to us by a recent writer, who has reminded us that there are spots in the universe which have not yet been reached by the beams of light which shone from this earth at its creation. If, therefore, we are able on an angel's wings to reach that spot in a second or two of time, the sight of this globe would be just becoming visible as it was when chaos passed into beauty. A few myriads of miles nearer, we should be met by the picture of the world in the state of deluge. And so in turn would present themselves the spectacles of patriarchal life; of Assyrian, Grecian, Persian, Roman civilization; and, at a short distance from the earth, the scenes of yesterday. Thus a mere transposition in space would make the past present. And thus, all that we need is the annihilation of space to annihilate time. So that if we conceive a Being present everywhere in space, to Him all past events would be present. At the remotest extremity of the angel's journey, he would see the world's creation; at this extremity, the events that pass before our eyes to-day. Omnipresence in space is thus equivalent to ubiquity in time. And to such a being, demonstrably, there would be no Time. All would be one vast, eternal Now.

Love in God is what love is in man; justice in God is what justice is in man; creative power in God is what creative power is in man; indignation in God is that which indignation is in man, barring only this, that the one is emotional, but the other is calm, and pure, and everlastingly still. It is through this humanity in the mind of God, if I may dare so to speak of Deity, that a revelation became possible to man. It was the Word that was made flesh; it

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was the Word that manifested itself to man. It is in virtue of the connection between God and man that God made man in His own image; that through a long line of prophets the human truth of God could be made known to man, till it came forth developed most entirely and at large in the incarnation of the Redeemer. Now in this respect it will be observed that God stands connected with us in relation to the soul as "the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Most men know nothing beyond what they see. This lovely world is all in all to them: its outer beauty, not its hidden loveliness. Prosperity—struggle—sadness—it is all the same. They struggle through it all alone, and when old age comes, and the companions of early days are gone, they feel that they are solitary. In all this strange, deep world they never meet, or but for a moment, the Spirit of it all, who stands at their very side. And it is exactly the opposite of this that makes a Christian. Move where he will, there is a Thought and a Presence which he cannot put aside. He is haunted forever by the Eternal Mind. God looks out upon him from the clear sky, and through the thick darkness—is present in the rain-drop that trickles down the branches, and in the tempest that crashes down the forest. A living Redeemer stands beside him—goes with him—talks with him, as a man with his friend.

Now the Spirit of God lies touching, as it were, the soul of man—ever around and near. On the outside of earth man stands with the boundless heaven above him: nothing between him and space—space around him and above him, the confines of the sky touching him. So is the spirit of man to the Spirit of the Ever Near. They mingle. In every man this is true. The spiritual in him, by which he might become a recipient of God, may be dulled, deadened by a life of sense, but in this world never lost. All men are not spiritual men, but all have spiritual sensibilities which might awake. All that is wanted is to become conscious of the nearness of God. God has placed men here to feel after Him if haply they may find Him, albeit *He be not far* from any one of them. Our souls float in the immeasurable ocean.

EVERY insincere habit of mind shrivels in the face of God. One clear, true glance into the depths of Being, and the whole man is altered. The name changes because the character is changed. No longer Jacob *The Supplanter*, but Israel *The Prince of God*,—the champion of the Lord, who had fought *with* God and conquered; and who, henceforth, will fight *for* God, and be His true, loyal soldier: a larger, more unselfish name—a larger and more unselfish man—honest and true at last. No man becomes honest till he has got face to face with God. There is a certain insincerity about us all—a something dramatic. One of those dreadful moments which throw us upon ourselves, and strip off the hollowness of our outside show, must come before the insincere is true.

God is approached more nearly in that which is indefinite than in that which is definite and distinct. He is felt in awe, and wonder, and worship, rather than in clear conceptions. There is a sense in which darkness has more of God than light has. He dwells in the thick darkness. Moments of tender, vague mystery often bring distinctly the feeling of His presence. When day breaks and distinctness comes, the Divine has evaporated from the soul like morning dew. In sorrow, haunted by uncertain presentiments, we feel the Infinite around us. The gloom disperses, the world's joy comes again, and it seems as if God were gone—the Being who had touched us with a withering hand, and wrestled with us, yet whose presence, even when most terrible, was more blessed than His absence. It is true, even literally, that the darkness reveals God. Every morning God draws the curtain of the garish light across His eternity, and we lose the Infinite. We look down on earth instead of up to heaven, on a narrower and more contracted spectacle—that which is examined by the microscope when the telescope is laid aside—smallness instead of vastness. “Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labor till the evening”; and in the dust and pettiness of life we seem to cease to behold Him: then at night He undraws the curtain again, and we see how much of God and eternity the bright, distinct day has hidden from us. Yes, in solitary, silent, vague darkness the Awful One is near.

SAY you that God is love? Oh, but look around this world. The aspect of things is stern—very stern. If they be ruled by love, it is a love which does not shrink from human agony. There is a law of infinite mercy here, but there is a law of boundless rigor, too. Sin, and you will suffer,—that law is not reversed. The young, and the gentle, and the tender, are inexorably subjected to it. We would shield them if we could, but there is that which says they shall not be shielded. They shall weep, and fade, and taste of mortal anguish, even as others. Carry that out into the next world, and you have “wrath to come.”

THE life which pervades all is He in whom we live and move and have our being. The different gradations of life are more truly of the same divine essence than the hard-material distinctions of common minds make them. The life of the plant and the life of the animals and of the intellect of man are essentially allied to the higher life which theologically we call the divine life in the soul. And I believe that it will some day be demonstrated that the Creator is much more closely united to His own works than our unspiritual conceptions represent Him. God is a Spirit—by which most people seem to mean a subtle, ethereal gas, imponderable, perhaps, but still not only substance, but matter besides, however attenuated. Now, spirit is mind; and I do not know what is meant by the locality of mind, except by saying that the universe is localized Deity.

THE chief knowledge which we have of God's holiness comes from our acquaintance with unholiness. We know what impurity is—God is *not* that. We know what injustice is—God is *not* that. We know what restlessness, and guilt, and passion are, and deceitfulness, and pride, and waywardness,—all these we know. God is none of these. And this is our chief acquaintance with His character. We know what God is *not*.

To the wise man the lightning only manifests the electric force which is everywhere, and which for one moment has become visible. As often as he sees it it reminds him that the lightning slumbers invisibly in the dew-drop, and in the

mist, and in the cloud, and binds together every atom of the water that he uses in daily life. But to the vulgar mind the lightning is something unique—a something which has no existence but when it appears. There is a fearful glory in the lightning because he sees it. But there is no startling glory and nothing fearful in the drop of dew, because he does not know, what the thinker knows, that the flash is there in all its terrors. So, in the same way, to the half believer a miracle is the one solitary evidence of God. Without it he could have no certainty of God's existence.

It is a dark moment when the sense of that personality is lost: more terrible than the doubt of immortality. For of the two—eternity without a personal God, or God for seventy years without immortality,—no one after David's heart would hesitate: "Give me God for life, to know and be known by Him." No thought is more hideous than that of an eternity without Him. "My soul is athirst for God." The desire for immortality is second to the desire for God.

Nor only is God everywhere, but all of God is in every point. Not His wisdom here and His goodness there: the whole truth may be read, if we had eyes, and heart, and time enough, in the laws of a daisy's growth. God's beauty, His love, His unity: nay, if you observe how each atom exists, not for itself alone, but for the sake of every other atom in the universe, in that atom or daisy you may read the law of the Cross itself.

GOD is love and goodness. Fill the soul with goodness, and fill the soul with love, *that* is the filling it with God.

THERE is in the very outset this distinction between what is great in God and what is great in man: To be independent of everything in the universe is God's glory, and to be independent is man's shame. All that God has He has from Himself—all that man has he has from God. And the moment man cuts himself off from God, that moment he cuts himself off from all true grandeur.

BRING into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Take what I cannot give—my heart, body,

thoughts, time, abilities, money, health, strength, nights, days, youth, age—and spend them in Thy service, O my crucified Master, Redeemer, God. Oh, let not these be mere words! Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My heart is athirst for God—for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

THE place of the rainbow depends upon your standing-point; and I say that the conviction of the being and character of a God depends upon your moral standing-point. To believe in God is simply the most difficult thing in the world. You must be pure before you can believe in purity; generous, before you can believe in unselfishness. In all moral truth, what you are, that is the condition of your belief. Only to him in whom infinite aspirations stir can an Infinite One be proved.

REMEMBER, however, that the main thing is to *believe in God*, which is the chief article of all the creeds. Our salvation does not depend upon our having right notions about the devil, but right feelings about God. And if you hate evil you are on God's side, whether there be a personal evil principle or not. I myself believe there is, but not so unquestioningly as to be able to say I think it a matter of clear revelation. The Bible *does* reveal God, and except with a belief in God there will and can be no goodness.

HEARTS are linked to hearts by God. The friend on whose fidelity you count, whose success in life flushes your cheek with honest satisfaction, whose triumphant career you have traced and read with a heart throbbing almost as if it were a thing alive, for whose honor you would answer as for your own,—that friend, given to you by circumstances over which you had no control, was God's own gift.

WE do not seek God—God seeks us. There is a Spirit pervading time and space who seeks the souls of men. At last the seeking becomes reciprocal—the Divine Presence is felt afar, and the soul begins to turn toward it. Then when we begin to seek God, we become conscious that God is seeking us.

God is so great, so glorious, that the mind is overwhelmed by, and shrinks from, the contemplation of His excellence, unless there comes the tender, ennobling thought that we are the children of God, who are to become like our Father in heaven, whose blessed career it is to go on in an advance of love and duty toward Him, until we love Him as we are loved, and know Him almost as we are known.

It is not chance, nor fate, which sits at the wheel of this world's revolutions. It was no fortuitous concurrence of atoms which massed themselves into a world of beauty. It was no accidental train of circumstances which has brought the human race to their present state. It was a living God.

WITH God I cannot quarrel, for I recognize the beauty and justice of His conditions. It is a grand comfort to feel that God is right, whatever and whoever else may be wrong. I *feel* St. Paul's words: "Let God be true, and every man a liar."

WHEN giving up this hopeless and sickening work of self-inspection, and turning from ourselves in Christian self-oblivion, we gaze on God, then first the chance of consolation dawns.

It is in these that the greatness of God consists—eternal in time, unlimited in space, unchangeable, pure in character. His serenity and His vastness arise from His own perfections.

SERVE Him, love Him, live to Him, and you will be bright, and full of hope, and noble.

EVERY day convinces me more and more that there is one thing, and but one, on earth worth living for,—and that is to do God's work, and gradually grow in conformity to His image by mortification, and self-denial, and prayer. When that is accomplished, the sooner we leave this scene of weary struggle the better, so far as we are ourselves concerned. Till then, welcome battle, conflict, victory!

HAPPINESS.

Look around this beautiful world of God's ocean dimpled into myriad smiles; the sky a trembling, quivering mass of blue, thrilling hearts with ecstasy; every tint, every form replete with beauty. You cannot, except willfully, misread its meaning. God says, "Be glad"! Do not force young, happy hearts to an unnatural solemnity, as if to be happy were a crime. Let us hear their loud, merry, ringing laugh, even if sterner hearts can be glad no longer. To see innocent mirth and joy does the heart good.

I LIKE sunny rooms, and sunny Truth. When I had more of spring and warmth I could afford to be prodigal of happiness; love the "darksome lawn brushed by the owl's wing," and meditate for hours over decay. Now I want sunlight and sunshine. I desire to enter into those regions where cheerfulness, and truth, and health of mind and heart reside.

UNQUESTIONABLY, we are not masters, on our own responsibility, of our own happiness. Happiness is the gratification of every innocent desire; but it is not given to us to insure the gratification of every desire; therefore, happiness is not a duty.

How cheaply happiness can be given! What opportunities we miss of doing an angel's work! I remember doing it, full of sad feelings, passing on, and thinking no more about it; and it gave an hour's sunshine to a human life, and lightened the load of life to a human heart—for a time!

THERE are transfiguration moments, bridal hours of the soul.

HOME.

THE domestic affections are the alphabet of love.

HOME is the one place in all this world where hearts are sure of each other. It is the place of confidence. It is the place where we tear off that mask of guarded and suspicious

coldness which the world forces us to wear in self-defense, and where we pour out the unreserved communications of full and confiding hearts. It is the spot where expressions of tenderness gush out without any sensation of awkwardness and without any dread of ridicule. Let a man travel where he will, home is the place to which "his heart untraveled fondly turns." He is to double all pleasure there. He is there to divide all pain. A *happy home* is the single spot of rest which a man has upon this earth for the cultivation of his noblest sensibilities.

WALK abroad and alone by night. That awful other world in the stillness and the solemn deep of the eternities above, is it your home? Those graves that lie beneath you, holding in them the infinite secret, and stamping upon all earthly loveliness the mark of frailty and change and fleet-
ingness,—are those graves the prospect to which in bright days and dark days you can turn without dismay? God in His splendors,—dare we feel with Him affectionate and familiar, so that trial comes softened by this feeling—it is my Father, and enjoyment can be taken with a frank feeling; my Father has given it me, without grudging, to make me happy? All that is having a home in God. Are we at home there? Why, there is demonstration in our very childhood that we are not at home with that other world of God's. An infant fears to be alone, because he feels he is not alone. He trembles in the dark, because he is conscious of the presence of the world of spirits. Long before he has been told tales of terror, there is an instinctive dread of the supernatural in the infant mind. It is the instinct which we have from childhood that gives us the feeling of another world. And mark, brethren, if the child is not at home in the thought of that world of God's, the deep of darkness and eternity is around him—God's home but not his home, for his flesh creeps. And that feeling grows through life; not the fear—when the child becomes a man he gets over fear—but the dislike. The man feels as much aversion as the child for the world of spirits.

MORAL decay in the family is the invariable prelude to public corruption. It is a false distinction which we make

between public integrity and private honor. The man whom you cannot admit into your family, whose morals are corrupt, cannot be a pure statesman. Whoever studies history will be profoundly convinced that a nation stands or falls with the sanctity of its domestic ties. Rome mixed with Greece, and learned her morals. The Goth was at her gates; but she fell not till she was corrupted and tainted at the heart. The domestic corruption preceded the political. When there was no longer purity on her hearth-stones, nor integrity in her Senate, then, and not till then, her death-knell was rung.

HUMILITY.

It is common to talk of the humble poor man, and the proud rich man. Let not these ideas be inseparably blended together. There is many a man who sits down to a meal of bread and milk on a wooden table, whose heart is as proud as the proudest whose birth is royal. There is many a one whose voice is heard in the public meeting, loudly descanting on legal tyranny and aristocratic insolence, who in his own narrow circle is as much a tyrant as any oppressor who ever disgraced the throne. And there is many a man who sits down to daily pomp, to whom gold and silver are but as brass and tin, and who bears in the midst of it all a meek, simple spirit, and a "heart refrained as a weaned child"; many a man who lives surrounded with homage, and hearing the applause and flattery of men perpetually, on whose heart these things fall flat and dead, without raising one single emotion of fluttered vanity.

CHRIST, as a humbled Christ crucified through weakness, yet living by the power of God. Because obedient unto death, therefore God also had highly exalted Him. Christ crucified, in opposition to the idea of Christ the Conqueror, or Christ the Philosopher.

Oh that I could breathe the Spirit of Him who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not! For in His case *all* was undeserved; but I cannot tell

how much, in my case, rashness and pride have irritated people.

It is not the unjeweled finger, nor the affectation of an almost Quakerish simplicity of attire, nor the pedestrian mode of traveling, nor the scanty meal, that constitute humility. It is that simple, inner life of real greatness, which is indifferent to magnificence, and surrounded by it all, lives far away in the distant country of a father's home, with the Cross borne silently and self-sacrificingly in the heart of hearts.

THERE are two ways in which the steam of machinery may find an outlet for its force: it may work, and if so it works silently; or it may escape, and that takes place loudly, in air and noise. There are two ways in which the spiritual energy of a man's soul may find its vent: it may express itself in action, silently; or in words, noisily; but just so much of force as is thrown into the one mode of expression is taken from the other.

IN Christ is magnified, not force of will, but the glory of a Divine humility.

No man will acknowledge that he is vain, but almost any man will acknowledge that he is proud. But tried by the balance of the sanctuary, there is little to choose between the two. If a man look for greatness out of God, it matters little whether he seek it in his own applause or in the applause of others. The *proud* Pharisee, who trusted in himself that he was righteous, was condemned by Christ as severely, and even more, than the *vain* Jews who "could not believe because they sought honor from one another, and not that honor which cometh from God only." It may be a more dazzling and a more splendid sin to be proud. It is not less hateful in God's sight. Let us speak God's word to our own unquiet, swelling, burning hearts. Pride may disguise itself as it will in its own majesty, but in the presence of the high and lofty One, it is but littleness after all.

IDEALS.

HIGH, bright, enthusiastic hopes of things impossible, and of things possible still, how they teemed in my imagination! The ideal, of course, always transcends the actual, and now experience of life again, with its manifold struggles, "fallings from us, vanishings," has left a sobered, saddened, but unconquerable resolve to live in earnest.

It is only in Christ that we find our ideal realized. There are times when a dark skepticism envelops our hearts; we turn to the world, and find that all is selfishness there; we turn to our own hearts, and there we find only pollution and corruption; it is when we turn to the Perfect One, we feel that God has once been upon this earth within the limits of humanity, it is in "God manifest in the flesh" that goodness becomes possible.

SET before you high models. Try to live with the most generous, and to observe their deeds. Unquestionably, good men set the *standard* of life.

IMAGINATION.

IMAGINATION is distinct from the mere dry faculty of reasoning. Imagination is creative—it is an immediate intuition; not a logical analysis—we call it popularly a kind of inspiration. Now imagination is a power of the heart. Great thoughts originate from a large heart: a man must have a heart, or he never could create.

It is a grand thing, when in the stillness of the soul thought bursts into flame, and the intuitive vision comes like an inspiration; when breathing thoughts clothe themselves in burning words, winged as it were with lightning; or when a great law of the universe reveals itself to the mind of Genius, and where all was darkness, his single word bids light be, and all is order where chaos and confusion were before. Or when the truths of human nature shape themselves forth in the creative fancies of one like the myriad-minded poet, and you recognize the rare power

of *heart* which sympathizes with, and can reproduce all that is found in man.

IMMORTALITY.

THERE is not a nation perhaps which does not in some form or other hold that there is a country beyond the grave where the weary are at rest. Now that which all men everywhere and in every age have held, it is impossible to treat contemptuously. How came it to be held by all, if only a delusion? Here is another probability in the universality of belief. And yet when you come to estimate this, it is too slender for a proof: it is only a presumption. The universal voice of mankind is not infallible. It was the universal belief once on the evidence of the senses that the earth was stationary: the universal voice was wrong. The universal voice might be wrong in the matter of a resurrection. It might be only a beautiful and fond dream, indulged till hope made itself seem to be a reality. You cannot build upon it.

ASKED from this world's standpoint—if there is no life beyond the grave, if there is no immortality, if all spiritual calculation is to end here,—why, then the mighty work of God is all to end in nothingness; but if this is only a state of infancy, only the education for eternity, in which the soul is to gain its wisdom and experience for higher work,—then to ask why such a mind is taken from us is just as absurd as to question why the tree of the forest has its first training in the nursery garden. This is but the nursery ground, from whence we are to be transplanted into the great forest of God's eternal universe. There is an absence of all distinction between the death of one man and another. The wise man dies as the fool with respect to circumstances.

NARROW the prospects of man to this time-world, and it is impossible to escape the conclusions of the Epicurean sensualist. If tomorrow we die, let us eat and drink to-day. If we die the sinner's death, it becomes a matter of mere taste whether we shall live the sinner's life or not. But if our existence is forever, then plainly, that which is

to be daily subdued and subordinated is the animal within us: that which is to be cherished is that which is likest God within us—which we have from Him, and which is the sole pledge of eternal being in the spirit life.

If souls be immortal, then Christianity has been an inestimable blessing: spirits have begun a sanctification here which will progress forever; but if souls be not immortal, then it is quite a question whether Christianity has blessed the world or not. We personally may think it has, but if we reject the immortality of man, there is much to be said on the other side. A recent writer has argued very plausibly that Christianity has done nothing. And if immortality be untrue, then we may almost agree with him when we remember the persecutions, the prison and the torture-chamber, the religious wars and tyrannies which have been inflicted and carried on in the name of Christ; when we remember that even in this nineteenth century cannibalism and the torture of prisoners are still prevailing. Again, are we quite sure that Christian America, with her slavery, is a great advance on Pagan Rome? or Christian England either, with her religious hatreds and her religious pride? If the kingdom of God comes only with observation, I am not certain that we can show cause why that life of sublime devotion of St. Paul's was not a noble existence wasted.

And again, if the soul be not immortal, Christian life, not merely apostolic devotedness, is "a grand impertinence." "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," was the motto and epitaph of Sardanapalus; and if this life be *all*, we defy you to disprove the wisdom of such reasoning. How many of the myriads of the human race would do right for the *sake* of right, if they were only to live fifty years, and then die for evermore? Go to the sensualist, and tell him that a noble life is better than a base one, even for that time, and he will answer: "I like pleasure better than virtue: you can do as you please; for me, I will wisely enjoy my time. It is merely a matter of taste. By taking away hope of a resurrection you have dwarfed good and evil, and shortened their consequences. If I am only to live sixty or seventy years, there is no eternal right or

wrong. By destroying the thought of immortality I have lost the sense of the infinitude of evil, and the eternal nature of good."

Besides, with our hopes of immortality gone the value of humanity ceases, and people become not worth living for. We have not a motive strong enough to keep us from sin. Christianity is to redeem from evil: it loses its power if the idea of immortal life be taken away.

BELIEF in a future life is not the result of inductive and inferential reasonings — such as the incomplete justice here, or the dissatisfaction with all earthly good — but that, rather, these result from the instinctive belief in immortality. Savages and children never doubt it; and the nearer you approach the instinctive state, the more indubitable it is. It is only when refinement, civilization and science come that it grows dim. The attempt to rest our intuitions on a scientific basis, inevitable as the attempt is, brings with it doubt — and you get back faith again when you quit logic and science, and suffer the soul to take counsel with itself, or, in Scripture language, "when you become again a little child."

THAT star is now looking down on the wise men's graves; and if there be no life to come, then this is the confusion: that mass of inert matter is pursuing its way through space, and the minds that watched it, calculated its movements, were led by it through aspiring wishes to holy adorations; those minds, more precious than a thousand stars, have dropped out of God's universe. And then God cares for mere material masses more than for spirits, which are the emanation and copy of Himself. Impossible! "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." God is the father of our *spirits*. Eternity and immeasurableness belong to Thought alone. You may measure the cycles of that star by years and miles: can you bring any measurement, which belongs to time or space, by which you can compute the length or breadth or the duration of one pure thought, one aspiration, one moment of love? This is eternity. Nothing but thought can be immortal.

THERE are some who say that to live a high life here, in the hope of immortality hereafter, is an unworthy object; that it is more noble to do good, and to act well, and be content to perish. Strange perversion! Is the desire of food, for the *sake* of food, selfish? Is the desire of knowledge, for the *sake* of knowledge, selfish? No; they are appetites each with its appointed end: one a necessary appetite of the body, the other a noble appetite of the mind. Then, is the desire of immortal life, for the sake of "more life and fuller," selfish? No; rather it is the noblest, purest, truest appetite of the soul. It is not happiness nor reward we seek, but we seek for the perfection of the imperfect,—for the deep, abounding life of those who shall see God as He is, and shall feel the strong pulsations of that existence which is love, purity, truth, goodness: to whom shall be revealed all the invisible things of the Spirit in perfection!

For what is our proof of immortality? Not the analogies of nature—the resurrection of nature from a winter grave—or the emancipation of the butterfly. Not even the testimony to the fact of risen dead; for who does not know how shadowy and unsubstantial these intellectual proofs become in unspiritual frames of mind? No; the life of the spirit is the evidence. Heaven begun is the living proof that makes the heaven to come credible. "Christ in you is the hope of glory." It is the eagle eye of faith which penetrates the grave, and sees far into the tranquil things of death. He alone can believe in immortality who feels the resurrection in him already.

If there be a faith that cramps and enslaves the soul, it is the idea that this life is all. If there be one that expands and elevates, it is the thought of immortality: and this, observe, is something quite distinct from the selfish desire of happiness. It is not to enjoy, but to *be*, that we long for. To enter into more and higher life: a craving which we can only part with when we sink below humanity, and forfeit it.

This was the martyrs' strength. They were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might attain a better

resurrection. In that hope, and the knowledge of that truth, they were free from the fear of pain and death.

ETERNAL life does not simply mean a life that lasts forever. That is the destiny of the *soul*—all souls, bad as well as good. But the bad do not enter into this “eternal life.” It is not simply the duration, but the quality of the life which constitutes its character of eternal. A spirit may live forever, yet not enter into this. And a man may live but for five minutes the life of Divine benevolence, or desire for perfectness: in those five minutes he has entered into the life which is eternal—never fluctuates, but is the same unalterably forever in the life of God. *This* is the reward.

THE fearful secret of sixty centuries has not yet found a voice. The whole evidence lies before us. We know what the greatest and wisest have had to say in favor of an immortality; and we know how, after eagerly devouring all their arguments, our hearts have sunk back in cold disappointment, and to every proof as we read, our lips have replied mournfully, *that* will not stand. Search through tradition, history, the world within you and the world without,—except in Christ there is not the shadow of a shade of proof that man survives the grave.

It is no strange or unknown thing to see the spirit ripening in exact proportion to the decay of the body. Many a sufferer in protracted illness feels each day more deeply the powers of the world to come. Many an aged one there is who loses, one by one, all his physical powers, and yet the spiritual in him is mightiest at the last. Who can read that ancient legend of the Apostle John carried into the Christian Church, able only to articulate, “Little children, love one another,” without feeling that age and death touch not the Immortal Love?

WE *wish* for immortality. The thought of annihilation is horrible: even to conceive it is almost impossible. The wish is a kind of argument: it is not likely that God would have given all men such a feeling, if He had not meant to

gratify it. Every natural longing has its natural satisfaction. If we thirst, God has created liquids to gratify thirst. If we are susceptible of attachments, there are beings to gratify that love. If we thirst for life and love eternal, it is likely that there are an eternal life and an eternal love to satisfy that craving.

It is only when all the rest of our human nature is calmed that the spirit comes forth in full energy; all the rest tires, the spirit never tires. Humbleness, awe, adoration, love, these have in them no weariness: so that when this frame shall be dissolved into the dust of the earth, and the mind, which is merely fitted for this time-world, learning by experience, shall have been superseded, then, in the opening out of an endless career of love, the spirit will enter upon that sabbath of which all earthly sabbaths are but the shadow—the sabbath of eternity, the immortal rest of its Father's home.

INDIVIDUALITY.

OUT of eight hundred millions of the human race, a few features diversify themselves into so many forms of countenance, that scarcely two could be mistaken for each other. There are no two leaves on the same tree alike; nor two sides of the same leaf, unless you cut and kill it. There is a sacredness in individuality of character; each one born into this world is a fresh new soul intended by his Maker to develop himself in a new fresh way; we are what we are; we cannot be truly other than ourselves. We reach perfection not by copying, much less by aiming at originality; but by consistently and steadily working out the life which is common to us all, according to the character which God has given us.

THERE is one universe, in which each separate star differs from another in glory; one Church, in which a single Spirit, the Life of God, pervades each separate soul; and just in proportion as that Life becomes exalted does it enable every one to shine forth in the distinctness of his own separate individuality, like the stars of heaven.

INFLUENCE.

Is it not affecting to think of a human being, not sick, nor in pain, with his natural force unabated, calmly sitting down to make arrangements for what shall be when he is in his last long sleep? But the act of an immortal is visible also in that a dead man rules the world, as it were, long after his decease. Being dead, in a sense he yet speaketh. He is yet present with the living. His existence is protracted beyond its natural span. His will is law. This is a kind of evidence of his immortality: for the obedience of men to what he has willed is a sort of recognition of his present being.

HOWEVER, each year as it rolls by seems to rivet with more enduring importance a day of anniversary—more especially one of an event which was the ushering into an eternity of either misery or joy a responsible creature. As boys, we have looked forward to them as the occasion of a holiday and juvenile ball. As men, we look back on them as so many waymarks on which are noted the sins and mercies of successive years. They were seasons of unmingled pleasure—now of self-reproach and melancholy retrospect. Opportunities irreparably suffered to slip by—years of self-indulgence—bad habits formed—friends alienated—others wantonly grieved—in some instances the hour of reparation and reconciliation lost forever, because they have gone to their long home. Two lines in the frontispiece of a little hymn-book, which I have not seen since five years old, seem branded with letters of fire on my memory:

Oh! if she would but come again,
I think I'd vex her so no more!

United with all this, the reflection that we were not only not forwarding the eternal interests of those with whom we were, but actually blocking up for them the entrance to the already narrow path—with all this coming in a torrent on the memory, what can a birthday be to a reflecting being but a season of deep humiliation and abasement before his Creator, his Benefactor, and his Judge?

HAVE we never felt the power wherewith the orator unites and holds together a thousand men as if they were but one; with flashing eyes and throbbing hearts, all attentive to his words, and by the difference of their attitudes, by the variety of the expressions of their countenances, testifying to the unity of that single living feeling with which he had inspired them? Whether it be indignation, whether it be compassion, or whether it be enthusiasm, that one living influence made the thousand, for the time, one.

DISTINGUISH between the Real and the Apparent. Elijah's apparent success was in the shouts of Mount Carmel. His real success was in the unostentatious, unsurmised obedience of the seven thousand who had taken his God for their God.

A lesson for all. For teachers who lay their heads down at night sickening over their thankless task. Remember the power of *indirect* influences,—those which distill from a life, not from a sudden, brilliant effort. The former never fail: the latter often. There is good done of which we can never predicate the when or where. Not in the flushing of a pupil's cheek or the glistening of an attentive eye, nor in the shining results of an examination, does your real success lie. It lies in that invisible influence on character which He alone can read who counted the seven thousand nameless ones in Israel.

JUDGMENT.

EVERY judgment coming of Christ is as the springing of a mine. There is a moment of deep suspense after the match has been applied to the fuse which is to fire the train. Men stand at a distance, and hold their breath. There is nothing seen but a thin, small column of white smoke, rising fainter and fainter, till it seems to die away. Then men breathe again; and the inexperienced soldier would approach the place thinking that the thing has been a failure. It is only faith in the experience of the commander, or the veterans, which keeps men from hurrying to the spot again—till just when expectation has begun to die away, the low, deep thunder sends up the column of

earth majestically to heaven, and all that was on it comes crushing down again in its far circle, shattered and blackened with the blast.

It is so with the world. By God's word the world is doomed. The moment of suspense is past: the first centuries, in which men expected the convulsion to take place at once; for even apostles were looking for it in their lifetime. We have fallen upon days of skepticism. There are no signs of ruin yet. We tread upon it like a solid thing fortified by its adamantine hills forever. There is nothing against that but a few words in a printed book. But the world is mined, and the spark has fallen, and just at the moment when serenity is at its height "the heaven shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," and the feet of the Avenger shall stand on the earth.

LIBERTY.

PEOPLE talk of liberty as if it meant the liberty of doing what a man *likes*. The only liberty that a man, worthy the name of a man, ought to ask for, is to have all restrictions, inward and outward, removed which prevent his doing what he *ought*. I call that man free who is master of his lower appetites, who is able to rule himself. I call him free who has his flesh in subjection to his spirit; who fears doing wrong, but who fears neither man nor devil besides. I think that man free who has learned the most blessed of all truths: that liberty consists in obedience to the power and to the will and to the law that his higher soul reverences and approves. He is not free because he does what he likes, for in his better moments his soul protests against the act, and rejects the authority of the passion which commanded him, as an usurping force, and tyranny. He feels that he is a slave to his own unhallowed passions. But he is free when he does what he ought, because there is no protest in his soul against that submission.

Some people seem to think that there is no liberty in obedience. I tell you there is no liberty *except* in loyal obedience—the obedience of the unconstrained affections. Did you never see a mother kept at home, a kind of pris-

oner, by her sick child, obeying its every wish and caprice, passing the night sleepless? Will you call the mother a slave? Or is this obedience the obedience of slavery? I call it obedience of the highest liberty, the liberty of love.

MEN throw off what they call the trammels of education, false systems, and superstitions, and then call themselves free: they think it a grand thing to reverence nothing; all seems to them either kingcraft or priestcraft, and to some it is a matter of rejoicing that they have nothing left either to respect or worship. There is a recent work in which the writer has tried to overthrow belief in God, the soul, and immortality, and proclaims this liberty as if it were a gospel for the race! My brother-men, this is not high knowledge. It is a great thing to be free from mental slavery, but suppose you are still a slave to your passions? It is a great thing to be emancipated from superstition, but suppose you have no religion? From all these bonds of the spirit Christianity has freed us; but then it has not left us merely free from these, it has bound us to God. "Though there be gods many, yet to us there is but one God." The true freedom from superstition is free service to religion: the real emancipation from false gods is reverence for the true God. For high knowledge is not negative, but positive; it is to be freed from the fear of the many in order to adore and love the one.

THERE are two things widely different, yet often confounded together—liberty and independence; and this confusion has done infinite mischief. Liberty is one thing— independence another: a man is free, politically, whose rightful energies are not cramped by the selfish, unjust claims of another. A man is independent, politically, when he is free from every tie that binds man to man. One is national blessedness, the other is national anarchy. Liberty makes you loyal to the grand law, "I ought"; independence puts you in a position to obey the evil law, "I will." So also religious freedom emancipates a man from every hindrance, external and internal, which prevents his right action. A man is not free who is enslaved by some lust, or who is restrained by Church thunders or by the rules of society

from letting his intellect and conscience work truly. Every Christian ought to be a free man, but no Christian is or ought to be independent. As a member of a church, he is not independent of those with whom he is connected in what is called the communion of saints. He is not independent of his brethren.

CHRISTIAN liberty is internal. It resides in the deeps of the soul; a soul freed by faith is safe from superstition. He who fears God will fear nothing else. He who knows moral wrong to be the only evil will be free from the scrupulosities which torment others. It is that free self-determination which rules all things, which can enjoy or abstain at will. This spirit is expressed in "All things are yours, whether life or death, things present or things to come,—all are yours."

PERHAPS we have seen an insect or reptile imprisoned in wood or stone. How it got there is unknown; how the particles of wood in years, or of stone in ages, grew round it is a mystery, but not a greater mystery than the question of how man became incarcerated in evil. At last the day of emancipation came. The axe-stroke was given, and the light came in, and the warmth; and the gauze wings expanded, and the eye looked bright; and the living thing stepped forth, and you saw that there was not its home. Its home was the free air of heaven.

Christ taught that truth of the human soul. It is not in its right place. It never is in its right place in the dark prison-house of sin. Its home is freedom and the breath of God's life.

It is not the shackle on the wrist that constitutes the slave, but the loss of self-respect; to be treated as degraded till he feels degraded; to be subjected to the lash till he believes that he deserves the lash: and liberty is to suspect and yet reverence self; to suspect the tendency which leaves us ever on the brink of fall; to reverence that within us which is allied to God, redeemed by God the Son, and made a temple of the Holy Ghost.

SLAVERY is that which cramps powers. The worst slavery is that which cramps the noblest powers. Worse, therefore, than he who manacles the hands and feet is he who puts fetters on the mind, and pretends to demand that men shall think and believe and feel thus and thus because others so believed and thought and felt before.

WHEREVER a man would and cannot, there is servitude. He may be unable to control his expenditure, to rouse his indolence, to check his imagination. Well, he is not free. He may boast, as the Jews did, that he is Abraham's son, or any other great man's son; that he belongs to a free country; that he never was in bondage to any man;—but free in the freedom of the Son he is not.

THE liberty to which we are called in Christ is not the liberty of devils, the liberty of doing what we will, but the blessed liberty of being on the side of the law, and therefore unrestrained by it in doing right.

TRUE freedom is to be emancipated from all false lords, in order to owe allegiance to all true lords; to be free from the slavery of all lusts, so as voluntarily to serve God and right. Faith alone frees.

TELL men that God is love; that right is right, and wrong wrong: let them cease to admire philanthropy, and begin to love men; cease to pant for heaven, and begin to love God: then the spirit of liberty begins.

HE who lives in the habitual contemplation of immortality cannot be in bondage to time, or enslaved by transitory temptations.

LIFE.

EACH man is a new soul in this world; untried, with a boundless possible before him. No one can predict what he may become, prescribe his duties, or mark out his obligations. Each man's own nature has its own peculiar rules; and he must take up his life-plan alone, and persevere in it in a perfect privacy with which no stranger intermeddleth.

LIFE is a deception; its anticipations, which are God's promises to the imagination, are never realized; they who know life best, and have trusted God most to fill it with blessings, are ever the first to say that life is a series of disappointments.

It is possible to have sublime feelings, great passions, even great sympathies, with the race, and yet not to love man. To feel mightily is one thing, to live truly and charitably, another. Sin may be felt at the core, and yet not be cast out. Brethren, beware. See how a man may be going on uttering fine words, orthodox truths, and yet be rotten at the heart.

ENJOYMENT, blessedness, everything we long for, is wrapped up in being. Darkness, and all that the spirit recoils from, is contained in this idea, not to be. It is in virtue of this unquenchable impulse that the world, in spite of all the misery that is in it, continues to struggle on. What are war, and trade, and labor, and professions? Are they all the result of struggling to be great? No, my brethren, they are the result of struggling *to be*. The first thing that men and nations labor for is existence. Reduce the nation or the man to their last resources, and only see what marvelous energy of contrivance the love of being arms them with. Read back the pauper's history at the end of seventy years — his strange, sad history, in which scarcely a single day could insure subsistence for the morrow — and yet learn what he has done these long years in the stern struggle with impossibility to hold his being where everything is against him, and to keep an existence whose only conceivable charm is this, that it *is* existence.

WE can all look back to past life and see mistakes that have been made,—to a certain extent, perhaps, irreparable ones. We can see where our education was fatally misdirected. The profession chosen for you perhaps was not the fittest, or you are out of place, and many things might have been better ordered. Now on this apostolic principle it is wise to forget all that. It is not by regretting what is irreparable that true work is to be done, but by making the

best of what we are. It is not by complaining that we have not the right tools, but by using well the tools we have. What we are, and where we are, is God's providential arrangement—God's doing, though it may be man's misdoing; and the manly and the wise way is to look your disadvantages in the face, and see what can be made out of them: Life, like war, is a series of mistakes, and he is not the best Christian nor the best general who makes the fewest false steps. Poor mediocrity may secure that; but he is the best who wins the most splendid victories by the retrieval of mistakes. Forget mistakes: organize victory out of mistakes.

ONE man is remarkable for intellectual, and another for moral, qualifications. One is highly sensitive, and another firm and unimpressible. One has exquisite taste, and another capacity for business. One nation is inventive; and another, like the English, persevering and able to improve inventions. It is well for us to dwell on this, because in our unchristian way of viewing things we are apt to forget that they are gifts, because they seem so simple. But all God's gifts are not sublime.

WE are led through life as we are allured upon a journey. Could a man see his route before him—a flat, straight road, unbroken by bush, or tree, or eminence, with the sun's heat burning down upon it, stretched out in dreary monotony,—he could scarcely find energy to begin his task; but the uncertainty of what may be seen beyond the next turn keeps expectation alive. The view that may be seen from yonder summit—the glimpse that may be caught, perhaps, as the road winds round yonder knoll,—hopes like these, not far distant, beguile the traveler on from mile to mile, and from league to league.

In fact, life is an education. The object for which you educate your son is to give him strength of purpose, self-command, discipline of mental energies; but you do not reveal to your son this aim of his education; you tell him of his place in his class, of the prizes at the end of the year, of the honors to be given at college.

These are not the true incentives to knowledge; such incentives are not the highest—they are even mean, and par-

tially injurious; yet these mean incentives stimulate and lead on, from day to day and from year to year, by a process the principle of which the boy himself is not aware of. So does God lead on, through life's unsatisfying and false reward, ever educating: Canaan first, then the hope of a Redeemer, then the millennial glory.

THERE are two kinds of good possible to men,—one enjoyed by our animal being, the other felt and appreciated by our spirits. Every man understands more or less the difference between these two: between prosperity and well-doing—between indulgence and nobleness—between comfort and inward peace—between pleasure and striving after perfection—between happiness and blessedness. These are two kinds of harvest, and the labor necessary for them respectively is of very different kinds. The labor which procures the harvest of the one has no tendency to secure the other.

THIS being the true life of humanity, name it how you will, sanctification, consecration, devotion, sacrifice, Christ the representative of the race, submits Himself in the text to the universal law of this devotion. The true law of every life is consecration to God: therefore Christ says, I consecrate myself: else He had not been a man in God's idea of manhood—for the idea of man which God had been for ages laboring to give through a consecrated tribe and a consecrated nation to the world, was the idea of a being whose life-law is sacrifice, every act and every thought being devoted to God.

IT is a twice-told tale that the world is passing away from us, and there is very little new to be said on the subject. God has written it on every page of His creation that there is nothing here which lasts. Our affections change. The friendships of the man are not the friendships of the boy. Our very selves are altering. The basis of our being may remain, but our views, tastes, feelings, are no more our former self than the oak is the acorn. The very face of the visible world is altering around us: we have the gray mouldering ruins to tell of what was once. Our laborers strike their ploughshares against the foundations of build-

ings which once echoed to human mirth — skeletons of men, to whom life once was dear — urns and coins that remind the antiquarian of a magnificent empire. To day the shot of the enemy defaces and blackens monuments and venerable temples which remind the Christian that into the deep silence of eternity the Roman world, which was in its vigor in the days of John, has passed away. And so things are going. It is a work of weaving and unweaving. All passes. Names that the world heard once in thunder are scarcely heard at the end of centuries: good or bad, they pass. A few years ago, and *we* were not. A few centuries further, and we reach the age of beings of almost another race. Nimrod was the conqueror and scourge of his far-back age. Tubal Cain gave to the world the iron which was the foundation of every triumph of men over nature. We have their names now. But the philologist is uncertain whether the name of the first is real or mythical, and the traveler excavates the sand-mounds of Nineveh to wonder over the records which he cannot decipher. Tyrant and benefactor, both are gone. And so all things are moving on to the last fire which shall wrap the world in conflagration, and make all that has been the recollection of a dream. This is the history of the world, and all that is in it. It passes while we look at it. Like as when you watch the melting tints of the evening sky — purple-crimson, gorgeous gold, a few pulsations of quivering light, and it is all gone: “We are such stuff as dreams are made of.”

WE are surrounded by mystery. Mind is more real than matter. Our souls and God are real. Of the reality of nothing else are we sure: it floats before us, a fantastic shadow-world. Mind acts on mind. The Eternal Spirit blends mind with mind, soul with soul, and is moving over us all with his mystic inspiration every hour.

I BELIEVE that the great lesson for us to learn — every day it seems more true to me — is this: God and my own soul; there is nothing else in this world I will trust to for the truth. To those alone we are amenable for judgment — to Him and to His voice within us. From all else we must appeal.

THE shepherd, with no apparatus besides his thread and beads, has lain on his back, on the starry night, mapped the heavens, and unconsciously become a distinguished astronomer. The peasant boy, with no tools but his rude knife, and a visit now and then to the neighboring town, has begun his scientific education by producing a watch that would mark the time. The blind man, trampling upon impossibilities, has explored the economy of the bee-hive, and, more wondrous still, lectured on the laws of light. The timid stammerer, with pebbles in his mouth, and the roar of the sea-surge in his ear, has attained correctest elocution, and swayed as one man the changeful tides of the mighty masses of the Athenian democracy. All these were *expedients*. It is thus in the life religious. No man ever trod exactly the path that others trod before him. There is no exact chart laid down for the voyage. The rocks and quicksands are shifting. He who enters upon the ocean of existence arches his sails to an untried breeze. He is "the first that ever burst into that lonely sea." Every life is a *new* life. Every day is a *new* day—like nothing that ever went before, or can ever follow after. No books, no systems, no forecast set of rules can provide for all cases; every case is a new case. And just as in any earthly enterprise, the conduct of a campaign, or the building of a bridge, unforeseen difficulties and unexpected disasters must be met by that inexhaustible fertility of invention which belongs to those who do not live to God *second-hand*. We must live to God first-hand. If we are in earnest, as Zaccheus was, we must invent peculiar means of getting over peculiar difficulties.

SUCH is life! At first all seems given. We are acquiring associations, sensations, new startling feelings; then comes the time when all give pleasure or pain by association—by touching some old chord which vibrates again. And after that all is loss—something gone, and more is going: every day, every year—this year, like all others. Into that flood have fallen treasures that will not be recovered: intimacies have been dissolved that will not be reunited, affections cooled, we cannot say why. Many a ship foundered, and the brave hearts in her will be seen

no more till the sea shall give up her dead. Many a British soldier fallen before Asiatic pestilence, or beneath the Kaffir assegai, above him the bush or jungle is waving green, but he himself is now where the rifle's ring is heard and the sabre's glitter is seen no more. Many a pew before me is full which at the beginning of the year was filled by others. Many a hearth-stone is cold and many a chair is empty that will not be filled again. We stand upon the shore of that illimitable sea which never restores what has once fallen into it; we hear only the boom of the waves that throb over all — forever.

Go to any church-yard, and stand ten minutes among the grave-stones; read inscription after inscription recording the date of birth and the date of death of him who lies below, all the trace which myriads have left behind of their having done their day's work on God's earth — that is failure or — seems so. Cast the eye down the columns of any commander's dispatch after a general action. The men fell by thousands; the officers by hundreds. Courage, high hope, self-devotion, ended in smoke — forgotten by the time of the next list of slain: that is the failure of life once more. Cast your eye over the shelves of a public library — there is the hard toil of years, the product of a life of thought; all that remains of it is there in a worm-eaten folio, taken down once in a century: failure of human life again. Stand by the most enduring of all human labors, the pyramids of Egypt. One hundred thousand men, year by year, raised those enormous piles to protect the corpses of the buried from rude inspection. The spoiler's hand has been there, and the bodies have been rifled from their mausoleum, and three thousand years have written "failure" upon that. In all that, my Christian brethren, if we look no deeper than the surface, we read the grave of human hope, the apparent nothingness of human labor.

BEGIN from belief and love, and do not coerce belief. Your mind is at sea. Be patient, you cannot drift on the wide, wide sea forever; drifting on in one direction, you must come into a current of wind at last bearing toward some land. Be sure you are in His hand, not hated but

loved. Do not speak bitterly of Him, nor mistake Him. Perhaps I was too severe on Shelley, but it was partly because I can make few allowances for deliberate enmity to God, though I may for not seeing Him; and partly because I fancied in many things he had done you injury. Let me say one word: do not begin with distasteful religious duties, long prayers, etc. Begin with the distinct moral duties. "If any one will do His will he shall know of the doctrine." Be simply a seeker of God and truth, and be sure you never can seek Him in vain; then make yourself at rest about the end, death, and so on. You must not "make haste," to borrow a phrase from a prophet.

THERE is a strange jar upon the mind in the funeral, when the world is felt to be going on as usual. Traffic and pleasure do not alter when our friend lies in the upper chamber. The great busy world rolls on, unheeding, and our egotism suggests the thought, So will it be when I am not. This world, whose very existence seems linked with mine, and to subsist only in mine, will not be altered by my dropping out of it. Perhaps a few tears, and then all that follow me and love me now will dry them up again. I am but a bubble on the stream: here to-day and then gone. This is painful to conceive. It is one of the pledges of our immortality that we long to be remembered after death; it is quite natural.

LET life be a life of faith. Do not go timorously about inquiring what others think, what others believe, and what others say. It seems the easiest, it is the most difficult, thing in life to do this—believe in God. God is near you. Throw yourself fearlessly upon Him. Trembling mortal, there is an unknown might within your soul which will wake when you command it. The day may come when all that is human, man and woman, will fall off from you, as they did from Him. Let His strength be yours. Be independent of them all now. The Father is with you. Look to Him, and He will save you.

THE life of man is a vagrant, changeful desultoriness, like that of children sporting on an enameled meadow,

chasing now a painted butterfly, which loses its charm by being caught—now a wreath of mist, which falls damp upon the hand with disappointment—now a feather of thistle-down, which is crushed in the grasp. In the midst of all this fickleness St. Paul had found a purpose to which he gave the undivided energy of his soul. "This one thing I do—I press toward the mark."

To live on your own convictions against the world is to overcome the world; to believe that what is truest in you is true for all; to abide by that, and not be over-anxious to be heard or understood, or sympathized with, certain that at last all must acknowledge the same, and that while you stand firm, the world will come round to you, that is independence. It is not difficult to get away into retirement, and there live upon your own convictions; nor is it difficult to mix with men, and follow their convictions; but to enter into the world, and there live out firmly and fearlessly according to your own conscience, that is Christian greatness.

THERE are three great principles in life which weave its *warp* and *woof*, apparently incompatible with each other, yet they harmonize, and, in their blending, create this strange life of ours. The first is, our fate is in our own hands, and our blessedness and misery is the exact result of our own acts. The second is, "There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." The third is, "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong"; but time and chance happen to them all. Accident, human will, the shaping will of Deity: these things make up life.

It is not the situation which makes the man, but the man who makes the situation. The slave may be a free-man. The monarch may be a slave. Situations are noble or ignoble, as we make them.

Our first life is spontaneous and instinctive. Our second life is reflective. There is a moment when the life spontaneous passes into the life reflective. We live at first by instinct; then we look in, feel ourselves, ask what we are

and whence we came, and whither we are bound. In an awful new world of mystery, and destinies, and duties, we feel God, and know that our true home is our Father's house which has many mansions.

OPPORTUNITIES for doing *greatly* seldom occur; life is made up of infinitesimals. If you compute the sum of happiness in any given day, you will find that it was composed of small attentions, kind looks, which made the heart swell, and stirred into health that sour, rancid film of misanthropy which is apt to coagulate on the stream of our inward life, as surely as we live in heart apart from our fellow-creatures.

How to lead the life divine, surrounded by temptations from within and from without; how to breathe freely the atmosphere of heaven, while the feet yet touch earth; how to lead the life of Christ, who shrunk from no scene of trying duty, and took the temptations of man's life as they came, or how even to lead the ordinary saintly life, winning experience from fall, and permanent strength out of momentary weakness, and victory out of defeat,—this is the problem.

No decree of God has insured our misery. All things work together for good to those who love God. But the same things work together for evil if they do not love God. The sailor who yields to and works with the winds of God is brought by them to the haven where he would be; but if he try to beat up against them, the very gale that was carrying him to safety overwhelms him; he is crushed by the very destiny that was working out his salvation.

THE invisible things of God from life are clearly seen—and, we may add, from every department of life. There is no profession, no trade, no human occupation, which does not in its own way educate for God.

THERE are people who would do great acts; but because they wait for great opportunities life passes, and the acts of love are not done at all.

HAVE you ever seen those marble statues in some public square or garden which art has finished into a perennial fountain, that through the lips or through the hands the clear water flows in a perpetual stream on and on forever; and the marble stands there passive, cold, making no effort to arrest the gliding drops? It is so time flows through the hands of men — swift, never pausing till it has run itself out, and there is the man petrified into a marble sleep, not feeling what is passing away forever.

LOVE.

THERE is no man who does not feel toward one or two at least, in this world, a devotion which all the bribes of the universe would not be able to shake. We have heard the story of that degraded criminal who, when sentence of death was passed upon him, turned to his accomplice in guilt, in whose favor a verdict of acquittal was brought in, and in glorious self-forgetfulness exclaimed, "Thank God, *you* are saved!" The savage and barbarous Indian, whose life has been one unbroken series of cruelty and crime, will submit to a slow, lingering, torturing death, rather than betray his country. Now, what shall we say to these things? Do they not tell of an indestructible something in the nature of man, of which the origin is Divine?—the remains of a majesty which, though it may be sullied, can never be entirely lost?

Love is universal. It is interested in all that is human: not merely in the concerns of its own family, nation, sect, or circle of associations. Humanity is the sphere of its activity.

It is not the mere instinct of lovingness which makes the Christian: to love the soul in Christ, *imputing* righteousness to it as God does, knowing the powers it has in it to produce good — feeling what it should be, and what it may become, and loving it as Christ loved it: this is the Christian charity. Hold fast to love. If men wound your heart, let them not sour or embitter it; let them not shut up or narrow it; let them only expand it more and more, and be able always to say with St. Paul, "My heart is enlarged."

REDEMPTION is this—to forget self in God.— Does not the mother forget herself for a time in the child; the loyal man in his strong feelings of devotion for this sovereign? So does the Christian forget himself in the feeling that he has to live here for the performance of the will of God.

THERE are two ways of reaching truth,—by reasoning it out and by feeling it out. All the profoundest truths are felt out. The deep glances into truth are got by love. Love a man, that is the best way of understanding him; feel a truth, that is the only way of comprehending it.

IN spite of all the seeming cruelties of this life; in spite of the clouded mystery in which God has shrouded Himself; in spite of pain and the stern aspect of human life and the gathering of thicker darkness and more solemn silence round the soul as life goes on, simply to believe that God is love, and to hold fast to that, as a man holds on to a rock with a desperate grip when the salt surf and the driving waves sweep over him and take the breath away;— I say that is the one fight of Christian life, compared with which all else is easy: when we believe that, human affections are easy. It is easy to be generous, and tolerant, and benevolent, when we are sure of the heart of God, and when the little love of this life, and its coldnesses, and its unreturned affections, are more than made up to us by the certainty that our Father's love is ours. But when we lose sight of that, though but for a moment, the heart sours, and men seem no longer worth the loving; and wrongs are magnified, and injuries cannot be forgiven, and life itself drags on, a mere death in life. A man may doubt anything and everything, and still be blessed, provided only he holds fast to that conviction. Let all drift from him like sea-weed on life's ocean. So long as he reposes on the assurance of the eternal faithfulness of the Eternal Charity, his spirit at least cannot drift.

LOVE is its own perennial fount of strength. The strength of affection is a proof not of the worthiness of the object, but of the largeness of the soul which loves. Love descends, not ascends. The might of a river depends not on

the quality of the soil through which it passes, but on the inexhaustibleness and depth of the spring from which it proceeds. The greater mind cleaves to the smaller with more force than the other to it. A parent loves the child more than the child the parent; and partly because the parent's heart is larger, not because the child is worthier. The Saviour loved His disciples infinitely more than His disciples loved Him, because his heart was infinitely larger. Love trusts on—ever hopes and expects better things; and this, a trust springing from itself and out of its own deeps alone.

CHRISTIAN love is not the dream of a philosopher, sitting in his study, and benevolently wishing the world were better than it is, congratulating himself, perhaps, all the time on the superiority shown by himself over other less amiable natures. Injure one of these beaming sons of good-humor, and he bears malice,—deep, unrelenting, refusing to forgive. But give us the man who, instead of retiring to some small, select society, or rather association, where his own opinions shall be reflected, can mix with men where his sympathies are unmet, and his tastes are jarred, and his views traversed, at every turn, and still can be just, and gentle, and forbearing. Give us the man who can be insulted and not retaliate; meet rudeness and still be courteous; the man who, like the Apostle Paul, buffeted and disliked, can yet be generous, and make allowances.

THE love of God is the love of man expanded and purified. It is a deep truth that we cannot begin with loving God: we must begin with loving man. It is an awful command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind." It is awful and impossible at first. Interrogate the child's conscience: he does not love God supremely; he loves his mother, and his sister, and his brother more. Now this is God's plan of nature. Our special human affections are given us to expand into a diviner charity. We are learning "by a mortal yearning to ascend." Our affections wrap themselves round beings who are created in God's image; then they expand, widen in

their range; become less absorbed, more calm, less passionate, more philanthropic. They become more pure, less selfish. Love was given, encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for this end * * * that self might be annulled. The testimony of St. John is decisive on this point. To him we appeal as to the apostle who knew best what love is. His love to God was unearthly, pure, spiritual; his religion had melted into love. Let us listen to his account: "No man hath seen God at any time." "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

According to him the thought of the invisible God is intolerable. It would be shorn of its dazzling splendor by being exhibited in our brethren. So we can gaze on the reflected sunlight on the moon. According to him, it is through the visible that we appreciate the invisible—through the love of our brother that we grow into the love of God.

An awful day is coming to us all—the day of Christ. A day of triumph, but of judgment too. Terrible language describes it: "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood." God shall be felt as He never has been yet. How shall we prepare for that august sight? Not by unnatural, forced efforts at loving Him whom no eye can see and live; but by much persistence in the appointed path of our common affections, our daily intercourse, the talk man holds with man in the hourly walk of the world's intercourse. By being true to our attachments. Let not a humble Christian be over-anxious if his spiritual affections are not as keen as he would wish. The love of God is the full-blown flower of which the love of man is the bud. To love man is to love God. To do good to man will be recognized hereafter as doing good to Christ. These are the Judge's words: "Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

EXPAND the heart and you enlarge the intellect. Touch the soul with love, and then you touch the lips with hal-

lowed fire, and make even the stammering tongue speak the words of living eloquence.

A CHRISTIAN *is* what the world *seems* to be. Love gives him a delicate tact which never offends, because it is full of sympathy. It discerns far off what would hurt fastidious feelings, feels with others, and is ever on the watch to anticipate their thoughts. And hence the only true, deep refinement—that which lies not on the surface, but goes deep down into the character—comes from Christian love.

THE cross of Christ—a system that is not to be built upon selfishness, nor upon blood, nor upon personal interest, but upon love. Love not self—the cross of Christ, and not the mere working out of the ideas of individual humanity.

EARTH has not a spectacle more glorious or more fair to show than this—love tolerating intolerance; charity covering, as with a veil, even the sin of the lack of charity.

LOVE is a habit. God has given to us the love of relations and friends, the love of father and mother, brother, sister, friend, to prepare us gradually for the love of God.

THE yoke of Christ is easy, the burden of Christ is light; but it is not light to everybody. It is light when you love it, and no man who has sinned much can love it all at once.

MANY a man is actively benevolent, charitable among the poor, full of schemes and plans for the benefit of others, and yet utterly deficient in that religious sense which accompanies the Christian grace of love.

THE love whereof the Bible speaks, and of which we have but one perfect personification—viz., in the life of Christ—is the desire for the best and true blessedness of the being loved. It wishes the well-being of the whole man—body, soul, and spirit; but chiefly spirit.

LOVE gives itself. The mother spends herself in giving life to her child; the soldier dies for his country; nay, even

the artist produces nothing destined for immortality, nothing that will *live*, except so far as he has forgotten himself, and merged his very being in his work.

THE sacred cause in which He fell was love to the human race: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man give his life for his friends."

NOT, Glory to the strong, but "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Not, "The Lord is a man of war, Jehovah is His name," but "God is Love." In Christ not intellect, but love, is consecrated.

HE is most dear to the heart of Christ, of course, who loves most, because he has most of God in him, and that love comes through missing none of the preparatory steps of affection, given us here as Primer lessons.

MAN is to be made one with God, not by soaring intellect, but by lowly love.

HUMAN love is but the faint type of that surpassing blessedness which belongs to those who love God.

THE highest moment known on earth by the merely natural, is that in which the mysterious union of heart with heart is felt. Call it friendship—love—what you will, that mystic blending of two souls in one, when self is lost and found again in the being of another; when, as it were moving about in the darkness and loneliness of existence, we suddenly come in contact with something, and we find that spirit has touched spirit. This is the purest, serenest ecstasy of the merely human—more blessed than any sight that can be presented to the eye, or any sound that can be given to the ear; more sublime than the sublimest dream ever conceived by genius in its most gifted hour, when the freest way was given to the shaping spirit of imagination.

WHEN bereavement has left you desolate, what substantial benefit is there which makes condolence acceptable? It cannot replace the loved ones you have lost. It can be-

stow upon you nothing permanent. But a warm hand has touched yours, and its thrill told you that there was a living response there to your emotion. One look, one human sigh, has done for you more than the costliest present could convey.

And it is for want of remarking this that the effect of public charity falls often so far short of the expectations of those who give. The springs of men's generosity are dried up by hearing of the repining and the envy and the discontent which have been sown by the general collection and the provision establishment among cottages where all was harmony before. The famine and the pestilence are met by abundant liberality; and the apparent return for this is riot and sedition. But the secret lies all in this. It is not in channels such as these that the heart's gratitude can flow. Love is not bought by money, but by love. There has been all the machinery of a public distribution: but there has been no exhibition of individual, personal interest. The rich man who goes to his poor brother's cottage, and without affectation of humility, naturally, and with the respect which man owes to man, enters into his circumstances, inquiring about his distresses, and hears his homely tale, has done more to establish an interchange of kindly feeling than he could have secured by the costliest present, by itself.

THE religion of Christ is not a law, but a spirit — not a creed, but a life. To the one motive of Love God has entrusted the whole work of winning the souls of His redeemed. The heart of man was made for love,—pans and pines for it: only in the love of Christ, and not in restrictions, can his soul expand. Now it was reserved for One to pierce, with the glance of intuition, down into the springs of human action, and to proclaim the simplicity of its machinery. "Love," said the apostle after him, "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

AND when that new spirit was in the world, see how straightway it created a new thing. Men before that had traveled into foreign countries: the naturalist to collect specimens, the historian to accumulate facts, the philoso-

pher to hive up wisdom, or else he had stayed in his cell or grove to paint *pictures* of beautiful love. But the spectacle of an Apostle Paul crossing oceans not to conquer kingdoms, not to hive up knowledge, but to impart life; not to accumulate stores for self, but to give, and to spend himself,—was new in the history of the world. The celestial fire had touched the hearts of men, and their hearts flamed; and it caught, and spread, and would not stop. On they went, that glorious band of brothers, in their strange enterprise, over oceans and through forests, penetrating into the dungeon, and to the throne,—to the hut of the savage feeding on human flesh, and to the shore lined with the skin-clad inhabitants of these far isles of Britain. Read the account given by Tertullian of the marvelous rapidity with which the Christians increased and swarmed, and you are reminded of one of those vast armies of ants which move across a country in irresistible myriads, drowned by thousands in rivers, cut off by fire, consumed by man and beast, and yet fresh hordes succeeding interminably to supply their place. A new voice was heard, a new yearning upon earth; man pining at being severed from his brother, and longing to burst the false distinctions which had kept the best hearts from each other so long — an infant cry of life — the cry of the young Church of God.

In all ages Love is the truth of life. Men cannot injure us except so far as they exasperate us to forget ourselves. No man is really dishonored except by his own act. Calumny, injustice, ingratitude,—the only harm these can do us is by making us bitter or rancorous, or gloomy; by shutting our hearts, or souring our affections. We rob them of their power if they only leave us more sweet and forgiving than before. And this is the only true victory. We win by love. Love transmutes all curses, and forces them to rain down in blessings. Out of the jealousy of his brothers Joseph extracted the spirit of forgiveness. Out of Potiphar's weak injustice, and out of the machinations of disappointed passion, he created an opportunity of learning meekness. Our enemies become unconsciously our best friends when their slanders deepen in us heavenlier graces.

Let them do their worst; they only give us the God-like victory of forgiving them.

HOLD fast to love. Though men should rend your heart, let them not embitter or harden it. We win by tenderness: we conquer by forgiveness. Oh, strive to enter into something of that large celestial charity which is meek, enduring, unretaliating, and which even the overbearing world cannot withstand forever. Learn the new commandment of the Son of God. Not to love merely, but to love *as He loved*. Go forth in this spirit to your life-duties: go forth, children of the Cross, to carry everything before you, and win victories for God by the conquering power of a love like His.

MAN.

Our nature is kindred with that of God; for if man has not a nature kindred to God's, then a demand such as that, "Be ye the children of"—that is, like—"God," is but a mockery of man. We say, then, in the first place, that in the truest sense of the word man can be a creator. The beaver *makes* its hole, the bee *makes* its cell; man alone has the power of *creating*. The mason *makes*, the architect *creates*. In the same sense that we say God created the universe, we say that man is also a creator. The creation of the universe was the Eternal Thought taking reality. And thought taking expression is also a creation. Whenever, therefore, there is a living thought shaping itself in word or in stone, there is there a creation. And therefore it is that the simplest effort of what we call genius is prized infinitely more than the most elaborate performances which are done by mere workmanship, and for this reason, that the one is produced by an effort of power which we share with the beaver and the bee, that of *making*, and the other by a faculty and power which man alone shares with God.

No man is sufficient for himself. Every man must go out of himself for enjoyment. Something in this universe besides himself there must be to bind the affections of every man. There is that within us which compels us to attach ourselves to something outward. The choice is not this:

love, or be without love. You cannot give the pent-up steam its choice of moving or not moving. It must move one way or the other—the right way or the wrong way. Direct it rightly, and its energy rolls the engine-wheels smoothly on their track: block up its passage, and it bounds away, a thing of madness and ruin. Stop it you cannot; it will rather burst. So it is with our hearts. There is a pent-up energy of love, gigantic for good or evil. Its right way is in the direction of our Eternal Father; and then, let it boil and pant as it will, the course of the man is smooth. Expel the love of God from the bosom—what then? Will the passion that is within cease to burn? Nay. Tie the man down—let there be no outlet for his affections—let him attach himself to nothing, and become a loveless spirit in this universe, and then there is what we call a broken heart: the steam bursts the machinery that contains it. Or else let him take his course, unfettered and free, and then we have the riot of worldliness—a man with strong affections thrown off the line, tearing himself to pieces, and carrying desolation along with him. Let us comprehend our own nature, ourselves, and our destinies. God is our rest, the only one that can quench the fever of our desire. God in Christ is what we want. When men quit that, so that “the love of the Father is not in them,” then they must perforce turn aside: the nobler heart to break with disappointment—the meaner heart to love the worldliness of the world.

MAN is but a learner—a devout recipient of a revelation—here to listen with open ear devoutly for that which he shall hear; to gaze and watch for that which he shall see. Man can do no more. He cannot create truth, he can only bear witness to it; he has no proud right of private judgment, he can only listen and report that which is in the universe. If he does not repeat and witness to that, he speaketh of his own, and forthwith ceaseth to be true. He is a liar, and the *father* of it, because he creates it. Each man in his vocation is in the world to do this: as truly as it was said by Christ may it be said by each of us, even by those from whose trades and professions it seems most alien,

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, to bear witness to the truth."

The architect is here to be a witness. He succeeds only so far as he is a witness, and a true one. The lines and curves, the acanthus on his column, the proportions, all are successful and beautiful only so far as they are true—the report of an eye which has lain open to God's world. If he build his lighthouse to resist the storm, the law of imitation bids him build it after the shape of the spreading oak which has defied the tempest. If man construct the ship which is to cleave the waters, calculation or imitation builds it on the model upon which the Eternal Wisdom has already constructed the fish's form.

The artist is a witness to the truth, or he will never attain the beautiful. So is the agriculturist, or he will never reap a harvest. So is the statesman, building up a nation's polity on the principles which time has proved true, or else all his work crumbles down in revolution; for national revolution is only the divine rejection stamped on the social falsehood—which cannot stand. In every department of life man must work truly—as a witness. He is born for that, nothing else; and nothing else can he do. Man, the son, can do nothing of himself, but that which he seeth God, the Father, do.

WITH respect to our moral and spiritual capacities, we remark that they are not only indefinite, but absolutely infinite. Let that man answer who has ever truly and heartily loved another. That man knows what it is to partake of the infinitude of God. Literally, in the emphatic language of the Apostle John, he has felt his immortality—"God in him, and he in God." For that moment infinitude was to him not a name, but a reality. He entered into the infinite of time and space, which is not measured by days, or months, or years, but is alike boundless and eternal.

A MAN, as man, is the child of God; and one child is brother to another, whether they are conscious of their heritage relationship or not.

THE capacity of ennui is one of the signatures of man's immortality. It is his very greatness which makes inaction

misery. If God had made us only to be insects, with no nobler care incumbent on us than the preservation of our lives, or the pursuit of happiness, we might be content to flutter from sweetness to sweetness, and from bud to flower. But if men with souls live only to eat and drink and be amused, is it any wonder if life be darkened with despondency?

THERE is no man whose doings are worth anything, who has not felt that he has not yet done that which he feels himself able to do. While he was doing it he was kept up by the spirit of hope, but when done the thing seemed to him worthless; and therefore it is that the author cannot read his own book again, nor the sculptor look with pleasure upon his finished work.

EVERYTHING fights against a man who is not on God's side, while he who does right, not because it is profitable, but because it is right, who loves the truth, arms himself with God's power, the universe is on his side, and he will surely know what the apostle meant when he said in the Epistle to the Romans, "All things work together for good to those that love God."

Thus did the Christians of old triumph. This was the history of the contest of one hundred and twenty weak men against the world: they were overwhelmed by sarcasm, exposed to lions, hurried to destruction, the earth was drenched with their blood; but a single fisherman could stand before the assembled rulers and say, "Whether it be good to obey you rather than God, judge ye." And eighteen centuries in the advance of Christianity has plowed the result into the history of the world. *Because* they were weak, therefore they were strong. Our own strength must yield to pain. In the Middle Ages, those who had studied the arts of torture knew well that the man who could face the lion in the amphitheater, or sit boldly on the heated iron seat, would be overcome by the simple dropping of water, day by day, on the same place, like the firm rock corroded by the waves of ages. So in the sense of a moral uprightness, we feel it impossible to do a thing abhorrent to our principles. "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?"

No, not a dog, but only a man—a man, yet relying on himself. Resign yourself passively to God; there is no other strength that lasts. Give up self-will. Lie like a child in your Father's hands, and then you will say in the depths of your spirit, "*When I am weak, then am I strong*"; "I am evil, but Thou art righteous; clothe me with Thy righteousness, and I shall be saved."

To a man of middle life, existence is no longer a dream, but a reality. He has not much more new to look forward to, for the character of his life is generally fixed by that time. His profession, his home, his occupations, will be for the most part what they are now. He will make few new acquaintances—no new friends. It is the solemn thought connected with middle age that life's last business is begun in earnest; and it is then, midway between the cradle and the grave, that a man begins to look back and marvel with a kind of remorseful feeling that he let the days of youth go by so half-enjoyed. It is the pensive autumn feeling,—it is the sensation of half sadness that we experience when the longest day of the year is past, and every day that follows is shorter, and the lights fainter, and the feebler shadows tell that nature is hastening with gigantic footsteps to her winter grave. So does man look back upon his youth. When the first gray hairs become visible,—when the unwelcome truth fastens itself upon the mind, that a man is no longer going up the hill, but down, and that the sun is already westering,—he looks back on things behind. Now, this is the natural but is it the Christian tone of feeling? In the spirit of this verse, we may assuredly answer, No. We who have an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, what have we to do with things past? When we were children we thought as children. But now there lies before us manhood, with its earnest work; and then old age, and then the grave, and then home.

MAN is the weakest, and yet the strongest, of living creatures,—because he obeys the laws of nature: he has the strength of the lion, the speed of the antelope; he bids the sun be his painter, and the lightning carry his messages,

and the seas bear his merchandise: because he is the servant, therefore he is the master.

ONLY a man can be the express image of God's person. Only through a man can there be a revelation; only through a perfect man a perfect revelation. Here is the principle of the Incarnation. And God's forgiveness is unintelligible, actually incredible, except through the human forgiveness which we see.

MARRIAGE.

MARRIAGE is, of all earthly unions, almost the only one permitting of no change but that of death. It is that engagement in which man exerts his most awful and solemn power—the power of responsibility which belongs to him as one that shall give account—the power of abnegating the right to change—the power of parting with his freedom—the power of doing *that* which in this world can never be reversed. And yet it is perhaps that relationship which is spoken of most frivolously, and entered into most carelessly and most wantonly. It is not a union merely between two creatures, it is a union between two spirits; and the intention of that bond is to perfect the nature of both, by supplementing their deficiencies with the force of contrast, giving to each sex those excellencies in which it is naturally deficient; to the one strength of character and firmness of moral will, to the other sympathy, meekness, tenderness. And just so solemn, and just so glorious as these ends are for which the union was contemplated and intended, just so terrible are the consequences if it be perverted and abused; for there is no earthly relationship which has so much power to ennoble and to exalt.

THERE may be circumstances in which it is the duty of a Christian man to be married, there are others in which it may be his duty to remain unmarried. For instance, in the case of a missionary it may be right to be married rather than unmarried; on the other hand, in the case of a pauper, not having the wherewithal to bring up and maintain a family, it may be proper to remain unmarried. You will observe, however, that no fixed law can be laid down

upon this subject. We cannot say marriage is a Christian duty; nor celibacy is a Christian duty; nor that it is in every case the duty of a missionary to be married, or of a pauper to be unmarried. All these things must vary according to circumstances, and the duty must be stated not universally, but with reference to those circumstances.

MEDITATION.

No man forgets what the mind has dwelt long on. It is not by a passing glance that things become riveted in the memory. It is by forcing the memory to call them up again and again in leisure hours. It is in the power of meditation to bring danger in its reality so vividly before the imagination that the whole frame can start instinctively as if the blow were falling, or as if the precipice were near. It is in the power of meditation so to engrave scenes of loveliness on a painter's eye, that he transfers to the canvas a vivid picture that was real to him before it was real to others. It is in the power of meditation so to abstract the soul from all that is passing before the bodily eye, that the tongue shall absently speak out the words with which the heart was full, not knowing that others are standing by.

I ENVY you the society of the eagles. I would give anything for leisure to think quietly, and get out of the jar of human life, and the perpetual necessity of talking, which consumes an amount of energy which should be thrown on action that few suspect or dream of. Count yourself happy that your life-calling is to do and not to chatter. "Speech is of silver, silence of gold," says the German proverb; and the talker is, to my mind, by necessity, the smallest of human souls. His soul must ever dwindle, dwindle, dwindle, for he utters great feelings in words instead of acts, and so satiates his need of utterance, the need of all.

It is good for a man to get alone, and then in silence think upon his own death, and feel how time is hurrying him along: that a little while ago and he was not,—a little

while still and he will be no more. It is good to take the Bible in his hands, and read those passages at this season of the year which speak of the Coming, and the end of all, till from the printed syllables there seems to come out something that has life, and form, and substance in it, and all things that are passing in the world group themselves in preparation for that, and melt into its outline.

MEDITATION is partly a passive, partly an active, state. Whoever has pondered long over a plan which he is anxious to accomplish, without distinctly seeing at first the way, knows what meditation is. The subject itself presents itself in leisure moments spontaneously: but then all this sets the mind at work—contriving, imagining, rejecting, modifying. It is in this way that one of the greatest of English engineers, a man uncouth and unaccustomed to regular discipline of mind, is said to have accomplished his most marvelous triumphs. He threw bridges over almost impracticable torrents, and pierced the eternal mountains for his viaducts. Sometimes a difficulty brought all the work to a pause; then he would shut himself up in his room, eat nothing, speak to no-one, abandon himself intensely to the contemplation of that on which his heart was set; and at the end of two or three days would come forth serene and calm, walk to the spot, and quietly give orders which seemed the result of superhuman intuition. This was meditation.

MEDITATION is often confounded with something which only partially resembles it. Sometimes we sit in a kind of day-dream, the mind expatiating far away into vacancy, whilst minutes and hours slip by, almost unmarked, in mere vacuity. This is not meditation, but reverie,—a state to which the soul resigns itself in pure passivity.

I SOMETIMES believe that the expression of communion is much more rich and varied where the presence is only that of mind, than when friends are together, and hour after hour passes, each taking for granted that all which he desires to say is understood.

It is not the number of books you read, nor the variety of sermons you hear, nor the amount of religious conversa-

tion with which you mix, but it is the frequency and earnestness with which you meditate on these things, till truths which may be in them become your own and part of your own being, that insures spiritual growth.

MINISTRY.

OURS should be a ministry whose words are not compacted of baldness, but boldness; whose very life is outspokenness, and free fearlessness: a ministry which has no concealment, no reserve; which scorns to take a *via media* because it is safe in the eyes of the world; which shrinks from the weakness of a mere cautiousness, but which exults even in failure, if the truth has been spoken, with a joyful confidence. For a man who sees into the heart of things speaks out not timidly, nor superstitiously, but with a brow unveiled, and with a speech as free as his spirit. "The Truth has made him free."

THIS, I do not say is, but ought to be, the spirit of every minister of Christ,—to feel that nothing can reward him for such efforts as he may have been permitted to make—nothing, except the grace of God received, and life moulded in accordance with it. No deference, no love, no enthusiasm manifested for him, can make up for this. Far beyond all evil or good report, his eye ought to be fixed on one thing—God's truth; and the reception of it.

THAT a ministry full of imperfection and blind darkness should do *any* good is a source to me of ever new wonder. That one in which words and truth, if truth come, wrung out of mental pain and inward struggle, should now and then touch a corresponding chord in minds with which, from invincible and almost incredible shyness, I rarely come in personal contact, is not so surprising, for I suppose the grand principle is the universal one—we can only heal one another with blood,—whether it comes from the agony itself, or the feeble and meaner pains of common minds and hearts. If it were not for such rewards and consolations unexpectedly presenting themselves at times, the Christian ministry would be, at least to some minds, and in the present day, insupportable.

THE dignity of a minister and the majesty of a man consists not in "most reverend," or "most noble," prefixed to his name; not in exempting himself from the common lot, and affecting not to mix with mean occupations and persons; nor yet in affecting that peculiar spirituality which is above human joys, and human pleasures, and human needs. But it lies in this,—in being not superhuman, but human; in being through and through a *man*, according to the Divine idea; a man whose chief privilege it is to be a minister—that is, a servant, a follower of Him who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

IF he will not interfere with abuses, but leave things as they are; if he will lash only the vices of an age that is *gone by*, and the heresies of *other* churches; if he will teach, not the truth that is welling up in his own soul, but that which the conventionalism of the world pronounces to be the truth—then shall there be shown to him a certain consideration; not the awful reverence accorded to the priest, nor the affectionate gratitude yielded to the Christian minister, but the half-respectful, condescending patronage which comes from men who stand by the church as they would stand by any other old time-honored institution; who would think it extremely ill-bred to take God's name in vain in the presence of a clergyman, and extremely unmanly to insult a man whose profession prevents his resenting indignities.

FOR ministers, again—what is ministerial success? Crowded churches—full aisles—attentive congregations—the approval of the religious world—much impression produced? Elijah thought so; and when he found out his mistake, and discovered that the applause on Carmel subsided into hideous stillness, his heart well-nigh broke with disappointment. Ministerial success lies in altered lives and obedient humble hearts: unseen work recognized in the judgment-day.

What is a public man's success? That which can be measured by feast-days and the number of journals which espouse his cause? Deeper, deeper far must he work who

works for eternity. In the eye of that, nothing stands but gold—real work: all else perishes.

Get below appearances, below glitter and show. Plant your foot upon reality. Not in the jubilee of the myriads on Carmel, but in the humble silence of the hearts of the seven thousand, lay the proof that Elijah had not lived in vain.

THE pulpit is not to be degraded into the engine of a faction. Far, far above such questions, it ought to preserve the calm dignity of a voice which speaks for eternity, and not for time. If possible, not one word should drop by which a minister's own political leanings can be discovered.

THE ministry is not to be entered lightly, nor without much and constant prayer for direction; but if a man's heart be set to glorify his Lord with the best service his feeble mind and body can offer, there can be nothing comparable to the ministry. I have already known some ministerial trials, and I foresee more—much hardness and much disappointment; but I may tell you from experience that you would take nothing that earth has to offer in exchange for the joy of serving Christ as an accredited ambassador.

MINISTERIAL success is not shown now by the numbers who listen. Not mere impression, but altered character, marks success. Not by startling nor by electrifying congregations, but by turning men from darkness unto light, from the power of Satan unto God, is the work done.

THEREFORE the whole work of the Christian ministry consists in declaring God as reconciled to man; and in beseeching with every variety of illustration, and every degree of earnestness, men to become reconciled to God. It is this which is *not* done. All are God's children by *right*; all are not God's children in fact.

THE minister's work is spiritual; the physician's temporal. But if the former neglect physical needs, or the latter shrink from spiritual opportunities on the plea that

the cure of bodies, not of souls, is his work, so far they refuse to imitate their Master.

No one can feel more deeply than I do the deficiencies, the faults, the worthlessness of the ministry of which you have spoken so kindly and so warmly. Whatever eyes have scanned those deficiencies, I will answer for it that none have scanned them so severely as my own. Others may have detected its faults more keenly, no one has felt them as bitterly as I have.

To live by trust in God—to do and say the right because it is lovely—to dare to gaze on the splendor of the naked truth, without putting a false veil before it to terrify children and old women by mystery and vagueness,—to live by love, and not by fear,—that is the life of a true, brave man.

It is not a clergyman's business to think for his congregation, but to help them to judge for themselves.

To bring the soul face to face with God, and supersede ourselves, that is the work of the Christian ministry.

MORALITY.

MORALITY is not religion, but it is the best soil on which religion grows. He who lives an honest, sincere, honorable life, and has strong perceptions of moral right and moral wrong, may not have reached the highest stages of spirituality; he may "know only the baptism of John"; he may aim as yet at nothing higher than doing his duty well, "accusing no man falsely, being content with his wages," giving one coat out of two to the poor; and yet that man, with scanty theology and small spiritual experience, may be a real "disciple" in the school of Christ, and one of the children of the Highest.

Nay, it is the want of this preparation which so often makes religion a sickly plant in the soul. Men begin with abundance of spiritual knowledge; they understand well the "scheme of salvation"; they talk of religious privilege,

and have much religious liberty; they despise the formal spirit and the legal spirit. But if the foundation has not been laid deep in a perception of the eternal difference between right and wrong, the superstructure will be but flimsy.

THE temptation is to live content with the standard of a man's own profession or society; and this is the real difference between the worldly man and the religious man. He is the worldling who lives below that standard, or no higher; he is the servant of God who lives *above* his age.

WHEN man comes to front the everlasting God, and look the splendor of His judgments in the face, personal integrity, the dream of spotlessness and innocence, vanish into thin air: your decencies, and your church-goings, and your regularities, and your attachment to a correct school and party, your gospel formulas of sound doctrine — what is all that, in front of the blaze of the wrath to come?

NATURE.

LET us not depreciate what God has given. There is a rapture in gazing on this wondrous world. There is a joy in contemplating the manifold forms in which the All-Beautiful has concealed His essence — the Living Garment in which the Invisible has robed His mysterious loveliness. In every aspect of Nature there is joy; whether it be the purity of virgin morning, or the somber gray of a day of clouds, or the solemn pomp and majesty of night; whether it be the chaste lines of the crystal, or the waving outline of distant hills, tremulously visible through dim vapors; the minute petals of the fringed daisy, or the overhanging form of mysterious forests. It is a pure delight *to see*.

I WAS struck by the singular beauty of the sky. Two mighty continents of cloud stretched from above me in parallel lines toward the horizon above the sea, where they seemed to meet. A river of purest blue, broad above my head, narrow by perspective in the distance, ran between them, seeming to lave their shores. Each of them had a

rim or edge of bright gold, as if the river were rippling and glistening on the banks; and innumerable islets of gold were dotted along both shores. The parallelism of them, producing that effect of perspective which you see in an avenue of trees, gave a strong perception of the boundlessness of the distance into which they stretched away. Looking at sky and clouds, you scarcely estimate distance. The vault seems very measurable, and it does not occur to you that clouds which appear only a few yards in length are really acres and acres of vapor. This combination of forms, however, forced me to realize the immensity of space, and a deeper sense of grandeur and loveliness came to me than I have felt for many weeks. It has always been so. When I have not *perfect* union with humanity, I find in trees and clouds, and forms and colors of things inanimate, more that is congenial, more that I can inform with my own being, more that speaks to me, than in my own species. There is something in the mere posture of looking up which gives a sense of grandeur; and that, I suppose, is the reason why all nations have localized heaven there, and peopled the sky with Deity.

I NEVER, I think, felt the freshness of the world, and the truth that every morning is a new day—a universe unbroken and fresh for effort and discovery—so much as two mornings ago by the sea-side. I do not mean that, even for a moment, it gave a conception of a fresh career or burst in life for me, but only that it gave me a conviction of a fact. To-day all is changed, but again I feel the advantage people here have from seeing the innumerable moods in which the sea presents itself. The wind is driving and moaning wildly—the sea all white on the beach—dark and cleft into grand chasms beyond—and almost lost in not a dense but a semi-transparent mist toward the horizon; the carts and flies which go past the dining-room window are seen, as I sit, low down, as if they were on the brink of a precipice; large gulls, with their wild, strange scream, heard every now and then, as they go down perpendicularly to the surface of the wave that has brought up their food, or floating about on the mist, colorless like shadows. “And I would that my tongue could utter the thoughts that

arise in me." For at this moment my heart is in perfect unison with all this scene. I look and look, until I wish I had no will.

THE world is but manifested Deity. That which lies beneath the surface of all appearance, the cause of all manifestation, is God. So that to forbid the love of all this world is to forbid the love of that by which God is known to us. The sounds and sights of this lovely world are but the drapery of the robe in which the Invisible has clothed Himself. Does a man ask what this world is, and why man is placed in it? It was that the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world might be clearly seen. Have we ever stood beneath the solemn vault of heaven when the stars were looking down in their silent splendor, and not felt an overpowering sense of His eternity? When the white lightning has quivered in the sky, has that told us nothing of power, or only something of electricity? Rocks and mountains, are they here to give us the idea of material massiveness, or to reveal the conception of the Strength of Israel? When we take up the page of past history, and read that wrong never prospered long, but that nations have drunk one after another the cup of terrible retribution, can we dismiss all that as the philosophy of history, or shall we say that through blood and war and desolation we trace the footsteps of a presiding God, and find evidence that there sits at the helm of this world's affairs a strict and rigorous and most terrible justice? To the eye that can see, to the heart that is not paralyzed, God is here. The warnings which the Bible utters against the things of this world bring no charge against the glorious world itself. The world is the glass through which we see the Maker. But what men do is this: They put the dull quicksilver of their own selfishness behind the glass, and so it becomes not the transparent medium through which God shines, but the dead opaque which reflects back themselves. Instead of lying with open eye and heart to *receive*, we project ourselves upon the world and *give*. So it gives us back our own false feelings and nature. Therefore it brings forth thorns and thistles; therefore it grows weeds—weeds to us; therefore the lightning burns with wrath, and the thunder mutters

vengeance. By all which it comes to pass that the very manifestation of God has transformed itself:—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; and all that is in the world is no longer of the Father, but is of the world.

God's character, again, nay, God Himself, *to us* would be nothing if it were not for the creation, which is the great symbol and sacrament of His presence. If there were no light, no sunshine, no sea, no national and domestic life, no material witness of His being, God would be to us as good as lost. The Creation *gives* us God: forever real in Himself, by Creation he becomes a fact to *us*.

I LOVE those passages in the Bible which speak of this universe as created by the WORD of God. For the Word is the expression of the thought; and the visible universe is the thought of the Eternal, uttered in a word or form in order that it might be intelligible to man. And for an open heart and a seeing eye it is impossible to gaze on this creation without feeling that there is a spirit at work, a living WORD endeavoring to make Himself intelligible, *laboring* to express himself through symbolism and indirect expression, because direct utterance is impossible; partly on account of the inadequacy of the materials, and partly in consequence of the dullness of the heart, to which the infinite Love is speaking. And thus the word poet obtains its literal significance of maker, and all visible things become to us the chanted poem of the universe.

THERE is a close analogy between the world of nature and the world of spirit. They bear the impress of the same hand; and hence the principles of nature and its laws are the types and shadows of the Invisible. Just as two books, though on different subjects, proceeding from the same pen, manifest indications of the thought of one mind, so the worlds, visible and invisible, are two books written by the same finger, and governed by the same idea; or rather, they are but one book, separated into two only by the narrow range of our ken.

It was a wild day, with driving clouds, drizzling rain, and lurid gleams of sunshine at intervals; but warm. It was rather fine to see the black and lead-colored clouds drifting over the steep sides of the downs, sometimes so dark and solemn in their march that I felt a kind of awe creeping over me. I am very fond of a *driving* sky, when it is not monotonous, and when the attitudes of the clouds vary a good deal,—some sweeping quite low and only just topping the hills, others sailing more slowly far above, and with tracts of clouds between these. The variety of color, the great diversity of speed, give a great charm to such an aerial effect: it impresses you more with the idea of supernatural *life* than when a surface of cloud is drawn at one uniform speed across the sky. Coming home, the heavens cleared brightly toward the setting sun, while all the rest was denser and more leaden by the contrast. Orange flakes and lines were shot across a clear sea-green sky, passing into blue, but made green where the yellow mingled with the blue, without any red to keep the two from blending. But it was the wildness of the whole, and the recklessness with which the whole air seemed animated, that gave the day its peculiar character, and power of exciting interest. I sat and read, and watched effect after effect, until the air and I seemed friends.

I wish that nature could do her own healthy work upon all our hearts. I could conceive a marvelously healing power to come from opening the soul like a child's, to receive spontaneously, without effort, the impressions of the unliving—and yet how living!—world around us with all the awe that accompanies them.

One impulse from a vernal wood
Will teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

PERHAPS no man can attain the highest excellence who is insensible to sensuous beauty. A sense of earthly beauty may, and often does, lead to softness, voluptuousness and defilement of heart; but its right result is to lead on as a stepping-stone to the sense of a higher beauty. Sensuous

beauty leaves the heart unsatisfied; it gives conceptions which are infinite, but it never gives or realizes the infinite.

For human beauty is a sight
To sadden rather than delight,
Being the prelude of a lay
Whose burden is decay.

Still it *leads* on to the infinite. It answers partly to a sense which it does not satisfy, but leaves you craving still, and, because craving, therefore seeking. The true objective of that sense is moral beauty; and by degrees we find and feel, as the outward fades and crumbles away, that there is a type of real beauty hidden under its seeming. Through the sensuous we perceive the supersensuous; through the visible, the invisible loveliness. Through disappointment at the unreal phantom, we learn to believe in and live for the unchangeable. No man knows the highest goodness who does not feel beauty.

I SAY a flower is more precious than gold or jewels—not simply *as* precious, but *more* precious, just because it has no intrinsic value, and because it will so soon wither. Its withered leaves are more treasured than a costly gem, and more sacred because they have not two kinds of value, but only one. Such gifts are as disembodied spirits—*all* spirit, and pure.

ALL somber thoughts pass away beneath the genial influence of this serene, cloudless sky. What a soft, pure, pearly blue! and the white smoke rises up into it in slow and most indolent wreaths, as if it were resolved to enjoy itself and *recline* upon cushions of summer air, robed in loosest, thinnest morning drapery of gauze.

Does not every *fresh* morning that succeeds a day of gloom and east wind seem to remind us that for a living spirit capable, because living, of renovation, there can be no such thing as “failure,” whatever a few past years may seem to say?

SOME years ago, on a moonless, but clear and starry night, I saw the aurora in a form quite different from its

usual one—streaks, or rather flakes, of pale, pure, white light moving slowly and solemnly, exactly as if they were crystallizing over a broad band of red, which spanned the zenith like the reflection of a town in flames. The softer light gradually bathed the fiercer one in its own pure glow, till it blended with it into a translucent rose flush. Harmonized, and yet contrasted with the quietness of an unclouded summer's night sky, it was thrillingly beautiful, and to me, not knowing what it was, mysterious too, almost awful; yet the softest, holiest thing I ever beheld.

THE highest pleasure of sensation comes through the eye. She ranks above all the rest of the senses in dignity. He whose eye is so refined by discipline that he can repose with pleasure upon the serene outline of beautiful form, has reached the purest of the sensational raptures.

God's glory is at work in the growth of the vine and the ripening of the grape, and the process by which grape-juice passes into wine. It is not *more* glory, but only glory more *manifested*, when water at his bidding passes at once into wine.

I HAVE been sitting out to look at this lovely night, with a pale pearly sky, *into*, not *at*, which you look, till you have pierced into the forever. Oh! for the "sea-psalm" and "the tender grace of a day which is dead," and never can come back! These are the moments when we feel the strange union we have with apparently unconnected existence; yet not the moments when we most strongly realize our immortality. For that, I think, one impulse of human affection or sympathy is more potent.

I HAVE no doubt that God has so constructed nature as to be an appropriate symbol of the Highest. I believe it has a sacramental power, even. But then the harmony of mind with the All is a different thing, and less definite than the sense of harmony with living, imperfect human beings, struggling together toward God, sinful and weak, which is the idea of a church. The universe exalts, but I do not know that it distinctly elicits the consciousness of guilt.

ALL this universe is God's blessed sacrament, the channel of his Spirit to your soul.

THE dew-drop that glitters on the end of every leaf after a shower, is beautiful even to a child; but I suppose that to a Herschel, who knows that the lightning itself sleeps within it, and understands and feels all its mysterious connections with earth, and sky, and planets, it is suggestive of a far deeper beauty.

MEN look at nature, but they do not look through it up to nature's God.

OBEDIENCE.

THIS universe is governed by laws. At the bottom of everything here there is a law. Things are in this way and not that: we call that a law or condition. All departments have their own laws. By submission to them, you make them your own. Obey the laws of the body — such laws as say, Be temperate and chaste: or of the mind — such laws as say, Fix the attention, strengthen by exercise; and then their prizes are yours — health, strength, pliability of muscle, tenaciousness of memory, nimbleness of imagination, etc. Obey the laws of your spiritual being, and it has its prizes too. For instance, the condition or law of a peaceful life is submission to the law of meekness: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." The condition of the Beatific vision is a pure heart and life: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." To the impure, God is simply invisible. The condition annexed to a sense of God's presence — in other words, that without which a sense of God's presence cannot be — is obedience to the laws of love: "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." The condition of spiritual wisdom and certainty in truth is obedience to the will of God, surrender of private will: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

OBEDIENCE to a law above you, subjugates minds to you who never would have yielded to mere will. "Rule thyself, thou rulest all."

LOVE God and He will dwell with you. Obey God and He will reveal the truths of His deepest teaching to your soul.

REVERENCE, love, meekness, contrition, obedience,—these conditions having taken place, God enters into the soul, whispers His secret, becomes visible, imparts knowledge and conviction.

Now these laws are universal and invariable—they are subject to no caprice. There is no favorite child of nature who may hold the fire-ball in the hollow of his hand and trifle with it without being burnt: there is no selected Child of Grace who can live an irregular life without unrest, or be proud, and at the same time have peace; or indolent, and receive fresh inspiration; or remain unloving and cold, and yet see and hear and feel the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

LOVE is manifested in obedience—Love is the life of which obedience is the form. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. * * * He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." Now here can be no mistake. Nothing can be Love to God which does not shape itself into obedience. We remember the anecdote of the Roman commander who forbade an engagement with the enemy, and the first transgressor against whose prohibition was his own son. He accepted the challenge of the leader of the other host, met, slew, spoiled him, and then in triumphant feeling carried the spoils to his father's tent. But the Roman father refused to recognize the instinct which prompted this as deserving of the name of Love—Disobedience contradicted it, and deserved death:—weak sentiment, what was it worth?

OLD AGE.

Our feelings do not weaken as we go on in life; emotions are less shown, and we get a command over our features and our expressions; but the man's feelings are deeper than the boy's. It is length of time that makes attachment. We become wedded to the sights and sounds of this lovely world more closely as years go on.

Young men, with nothing rooted deep, are prodigal of life. It is an adventure to them, rather than a misfortune, to leave their country forever. With the old man it is like tearing his own heart from him. And so it was that when Lot quitted Sodom the younger members of his family went on gladly. It is a touching truth; it was the aged one who looked behind to the home which had so many recollections connected with it. And therefore it is, that when men approach that period of existence when they must go, there is an instinctive lingering over things which they shall never see again. Every time the sun sets, every time the old man sees his children gathering round him, there is a filling of the eye with an emotion that we can understand. There is upon his soul the thought of parting, that strange wrench from all we love, which makes death (say what moralists will of it) a bitter thing.

It is a degrading thing to enjoy husks till there is no man to give them. It is a base thing to resolve to give to God as little as possible, and not to serve Him till you must.

THE awful feelings about Life and God are *not* those which characterize our earlier years. It is quite natural that in the first espousals of the soul in its freshness to God, bright and hopeful feelings should be the predominant or the only ones. Joy marks, and ought to mark, early religion. Nay, by God's merciful arrangement, even sin is not that crushing thing in early life which it sometimes becomes in later years, when we mourn not so much a calculable number of sinful acts, as a deep pervading sinfulness. Remorse does not corrode with its evil power then. Forgiveness is not only granted, but consciously and joyfully felt. It

is as life matures, that the weight of life, the burden of this unintelligible world, and the mystery of the hidden God, are felt.

CLINGING to life is no proof that a man is still longing for the world. We often cling to life the more tenaciously as years go on. The deeper the tree has struck its roots into the ground, the less willing it is to be rooted up. But there is many a one who so hangs on just because he has not the desperate hardihood to quit it, nor faith enough to be "willing to depart." The world and he have understood each other; he has seen through it; he has ceased to hope anything from it. The love of the Father is not in him, but "the lust of the world" has passed away.

THE austerity that comes *after* life's experience is more healthy, because more natural, than that which begins it. When it begins life it is the pouring of the new wine into the old weak wine-skins, which burst; and the young heart, cheated out of its youth, indemnifies itself by an attempt to realize the feelings which were denied it by a double measure of indulgence in age. An unlovely spectacle! Can anything be more melancholy than the spectacle of one who is trying to be young, and unable to descend gracefully and with dignity into the vale of years? There is a fine tomb of, I think, Turenne, at Strasburg. An open grave lies before him; Death at his side, touching him with his dart; and the warrior descends, with a lofty step and saddened brow, but a conqueror still, because the act is so evidently his own and embraced by his own will, into the sepulchre.

MANHOOD in the Christian life is a better thing than boyhood, because it is a riper thing; and old age ought to be a brighter and a calmer and a more serene thing than manhood. There is a second youth for man, better and holier than his first, if he will look on and not back. There is a peculiar simplicity of heart and a touching singleness of purpose in Christian old age, which has ripened gradually and not fitfully. It is then that to the wisdom of the serpent is added the harmlessness of the dove; it is then that

to the firmness of manhood is joined almost the gentleness of womanhood; it is then that the somewhat austere and sour character of growing strength, moral and intellectual, mellows into the rich ripeness of an old age, made sweet and tolerant by experience; it is then that man returns to first principles. There comes a love more pure and deep than the boy could ever feel; there comes a conviction, with a strength beyond that which the boy could ever know, that the earliest lesson of life is infinite, Christ is all in all.

It is a spectacle for men and angels, when a man has become old in feeling and worn out before his time. Know we none such among our own acquaintance? Have the young never seen those aged ones who stand among them in their pleasures, almost as if to warn them of what they themselves must come to at last? Have they never marked the dull and sated look that they cast upon the whole scene, as upon a thing which they would fain enjoy and cannot? Know you what you have been looking on? A sated worldling — one to whom pleasure was rapture once, as it is to you now. Thirty years more, that look and that place will be yours: and that is the way the world rewards its veterans: it chains them to it after the "lust of the world" has passed away.

PATIENCE.

IN all the works of God there is a conspicuous absence of haste and hurry. All that He does ripens slowly. Six slow days and nights of creative force before man was made: two thousand years to discipline and form a Jewish people: four thousand years of darkness and ignorance and crime before the fullness of the time had come, when He could send forth His Son: unnumbered ages of war before the thousand years of solid peace can come. Whatever contradicts this Divine plan must pay the price of haste — brief duration. All that is done before the hour is come decays fast. All precocious things ripened before their time wither before their time: precocious fruit, precocious minds, forced feelings. "He that believeth shall not make haste."

MAN must strike soon if he would strike at all; for opportunities pass away from him, and his victim may escape his vengeance by death. There is no passing of opportunity with God, and it is this which makes his long-suffering a solemn thing. God can wait, for he has a whole eternity before Him in which he may strike.

THE Son of God lived till thirty in an obscure village of Judea, unknown; then came forth a matured and perfect man—with mind and heart and frame in perfect balance of humanity. It is a divine lesson! I would I could say as strongly as I feel deeply. Our stimulating artificial culture destroys depth. Our competition, our nights turned into days by pleasure, leave no time for earnestness. We are superficial men. Character in the world wants *root*.

WE do not reach spirituality of character by spasmodic, unnatural efforts to crush the nature that is within us, but by slow and patient care to develop and disengage it from its evil. It is not angelic but human excellence at which we are to aim; nor can we "be perfect as our Father is perfect," except in our degree. "Every man in his own order."

IF the husbandman, disappointed at the delay which ensues before the blade breaks the soil, were to rake away the earth to examine if germination were going on, he would have a poor harvest. He must have "long patience, till he receive the early and the latter rain." The winter frost must mellow the seed lying in the genial bosom of the earth; the rains of spring must swell it, and the suns of summer mature it. So with you. It is the work of a long life to become a Christian. Many, oh, many a time are we tempted to say, "I make no progress at all. It is only failure after failure. Nothing grows." Now look at the sea when the flood is coming in. Go and stand by the sea-beach, and you will think that the ceaseless flux and reflux is but retrogression equal to the advance. But look again in an hour's time, and the whole ocean has advanced. Every advance has been beyond the last, and every retrograde movement has been an imperceptible trifle less than the last. This is progress; to be estimated at the end of hours,

not minutes. And this is *Christian* progress. Many a fluctuation—many a backward motion, with a rush at times so vehement that all seems lost; but if the eternal work be real, every failure has been a real gain, and the next does not carry us so far back as we were before. Every advance is a real gain, and part of it is never lost. Both when we advance and when we fail, we gain. We are nearer to God than we were. The flood of spirit-life has carried us up higher on the everlasting shores, where the waves of life beat no more, and its fluctuations end, and all is safe at last. "This is the faith and patience of the saints."

OH, be brave and wait! These are dark days—lonely days—and our unbelieving impatience cannot bear to wait, but must rashly, and by impetuous steps of our own, plunge after the *ignis fatuus* of light. Peace at once! Light at once! I cannot wait my time, and I will not!

PEACE.

THERE is no peace except there is the possibility of the opposite of peace, although now restrained and controlled! You do not speak of the peace of a grain of sand, because it cannot be otherwise than merely insignificant, and at rest. You do not speak of the peace of a mere pond; you speak of the peace of the sea, because there is the opposite of peace implied, there is power and strength. And this, brethren, is the real character of the peace in the mind and soul of man. Oh! we make a great mistake when we say there is strength in passion, in the exhibition of emotion. Passion, and emotion, and all those outward manifestations, prove, not strength, but weakness. If the passions of a man are strong, it proves the man himself is weak if he cannot restrain or control his passions. The real strength and majesty of the soul of man is calmness, the manifestation of strength; "the peace of God" ruling; the word of Christ saying to the inward storms, "Peace!" and there is "a great calm."

THERE are several things called peace which are by no means Divine or Godlike peace. There is peace, for example,

in the man who lives for and enjoys self, with no nobler aspiration goading him on to make him feel the rest of God; that is peace, but that is merely the peace of toil. There is rest on the surface of the caverned lake, which no wind can stir; but that is the peace of stagnation. There is peace amongst the stones which have fallen and rolled down the mountain's side, and lie there quietly at rest; but that is the peace of inanity. There is peace in the hearts of enemies who lie together, side by side, in the same trench of the battle-field, the animosities of their souls silenced at length, and their hands no longer clenched in deadly enmity against each other; but that is the peace of death. If our peace be but the peace of the sensualist satisfying pleasure, if it be but the peace of mental torpor and inaction, the peace of apathy, or the peace of the soul dead in trespasses and sins, we may whisper to ourselves, "Peace, peace," but there will be no peace; *there* is not the peace of unity nor the peace of God, for the peace of God is the living peace of love.

A CONSISTENT Christian may not have rapture; but he has that which is much better than rapture: calmness—God's serene and perpetual presence. And after all, brethren, that is the best. One to whom much is forgiven has much joy. He must have it, if it were only to support him through those fearful trials which are to come—those haunting reminiscences of a polluted heart—those frailties—those inconsistencies to which the habits of past indulgence have made him liable. A terrible struggle is in store for him yet. Grudge him not one hour of unclouded exultation. But religion's best gift—rest, serenity; the quiet daily love of one who lives perpetually with his Father's family; uninterrupted usefulness;—*that* belongs to him who has lived steadily, and walked with duty, neither grieving nor insulting the Holy Ghost of God.

LET us understand what is meant by this rest: let us look to those symbols about us in the world of nature by which it is suggested. It is not the lake locked in ice that suggests repose, but the river moving on calmly and rapidly in silent majesty and strength. It is not the cattle lying in

the sun, but the eagle cleaving the air with fixed pinions, that gives you the idea of repose combined with strength and motion. In creation, the rest of God is exhibited as a sense of power which nothing wearies. When chaos burst into harmony, so to speak, God had rest.

There are two deep principles in nature in apparent contradiction—one, the aspiration after perfection; the other, the longing after repose. In the harmony of these lies the rest of the soul of man. There have been times when we have experienced this. Then the winds have been hushed, and the throb and the tumult of the passions have been blotted out of our bosoms. That was a moment when we were in harmony with all around, reconciled to ourselves and to our God; when we sympathized with all that was pure, all that was beautiful, all that was lovely.

This was not stagnation, it was fullness of life—life in its most expanded form, such as nature witnessed in her first hour. This is life in that form of benevolence which expands into the mind of Christ. And when this is working in the soul it is marvelous how it distills into a man's words and countenance.

FAR deeper lodged in the human breast than the desire of honor or riches is seated the desire for rest: there are, doubtless, eager earnest spirits, who may scorn pleasure, but, nevertheless, they long for rest.

To him who takes Christ's yoke, not in a spirit of selfish ease and acquiescence in evil, but in strife and stern battle with it, the rest of Christ streams in upon his soul.

Yet, thank God! there is rest—many an interval of saddest, sweetest rest—even here, when it seems as if evening breezes from that other land, laden with fragrance, played upon the cheeks and lulled the heart. There are times, even on the stormy sea, when a gentle whisper breathes softly as of heaven, and sends into the soul a dream of ecstasy which can never again wholly die, even amidst the jar and whirl of waking life. How such whispers make the blood stop, and the very flesh creep with a sense of mysterious communion! How singularly such

moments are the epochs of life—the few points that stand out prominently in the recollection after the flood of years has buried all the rest, as all the low shore disappears, leaving only a few rock-points visible at high tide!

PENITENCE.

By repentance is meant, in Scripture, change of life, alteration of habits, renewal of heart. This is the aim and meaning of all sorrow. The consequences of sin are meant to wean from sin. The penalty annexed to it is in the first instance corrective, not penal. Fire burns the child, to teach it one of the truths of this universe—the property of fire to burn. The first time it cuts its hand with a sharp knife it has gained a lesson which it never will forget. Now, in the case of pain this experience is seldom, if ever, in vain. There is little chance of a child forgetting that fire will burn, and that sharp steel will cut; but the moral lessons contained in the penalties annexed to wrong-doing are just as truly intended, though they are by no means so unerring in enforcing their application. The fever in the veins and the headache which succeed intoxication, are meant to warn against excess. On the first occasion they are simply corrective; in every succeeding one they assume more and more a penal character in proportion as the conscience carries with them the sense of ill desert.

THIS is the great, peculiar feature of this sorrow: God is there, accordingly self is less prominent. It is not a microscopic self-examination, nor a mourning in which self is ever uppermost: *my* character gone; the greatness of *my* sin; the forfeiture of *my* salvation. The thought of God absorbs all that. I believe the feeling of true penitence would express itself in such words as these: There is a righteousness, though I have not attained it. There is a purity, and a love, and a beauty, though my life exhibits little of them. In that I can rejoice. Of that I can feel the surpassing loveliness. My doings? They are worthless, I cannot endure to think of them. I am not thinking of them. I have something else to think of. There, there; in that life I see it. And so the Christian, gazing not on

what he is, but on what he desires to be, dares in penitence to say, That righteousness is mine; dares, even when the recollection of his sin is most vivid and most poignant, to say with Peter, thinking less of himself than of God, and sorrowing, as it were, with God: "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee."

THE only religion possible to man is the religion of penitence. The righteousness of man cannot be the integrity of the virgin citadel which has never admitted the enemy; it can never be more than the integrity of the city which has been surprised and roused, and which, having expelled the invader with blood in the streets, has suffered great inward loss.

Appointed to these two kinds of righteousness there are two kinds of happiness. To the first is attached the blessing of entire ignorance of the stain, pollution and misery of guilt,—a blessed happiness; but it may be that it is not the greatest. To the happiness resulting from the other is added a greater strength of emotion; it may not have the calmness and peace of the first, but, perhaps, in point of intensity and fullness it is superior. It may be that the highest happiness can only be purchased through suffering: and the language of the Bible seems almost to authorize us to say that the happiness of penitence is deeper and more blessed than the happiness of the righteousness that has never fallen could be.

There are two kinds of friendship—that which has never had a shock, and that which, after having been doubted, is at last made sure. The happiness of this last is perhaps the greater. Such seems to be the truth implied in the parable of the Prodigal Son: in the robe, and the ring, and the fatted calf, and the music and dancing, and the rapture of a father's embrace; and once more, in those words of our Redeemer, "There is more joy among the angels of heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance." All these seem to tell of the immeasurable blessedness of penitence.

If we have lost God's bright and happy presence by our willfulness, what then? Unrelieved sadness? Nay, brethren:

calmness, purity, may have gone from our heart, but *all* is not gone yet. Just as sweetness comes from the bark of the cinnamon when it is bruised, so can the spirit of the cross of Christ bring beauty and holiness and peace out of the bruised and broken heart. God dwells with the contrite as much as with the humble.

It is the glory of our Master's Gospel that it is the refuge of the broken-hearted. It is the strange mercy of our God that He does not reject the writhings of a jaded heart. Let the world curl its lip if it will, when it sees through the causes of the prodigal's return. And if the sinner does not come to God taught by this disappointment, what then? If affections crushed in early life have driven one man to God; if wrecked and ruined hopes have made another man religious; if want of success in a profession has broken the spirit; if the human life lived out too passionately has left a surfeit and a craving behind which end in seriousness; if one is brought by the sadness of widowed life, and another by the forced desolation of involuntary single life; if when the mighty famine comes into the heart and not a husk is left, not a pleasure untried, and then, and not till then, the remorseful resolve is made, "I will arise and go to my Father";—what then? Why, this, that the history of penitence * * * sheds only a brighter luster round the love of Christ, who rejoices to receive such wanderers, worthless as they are, back into His bosom.

PERFECTION.

PERFECTION is being, not doing; it is not to effect an act, but to achieve a character. If the aim of life were to do something, then, as in an earthly business, except in doing this one thing the business would be at a standstill. The student is not doing the one thing of student life when he has ceased to think or read. The laborer leaves his work undone when the spade is not in his hand, and he sits beneath the hedge to rest. But in Christian life every moment and every act is an opportunity for doing the one thing of *becoming* Christlike. Every day is full of a most impressive experience. Every temptation to evil temper which can

assail us to-day will be an opportunity to decide the question whether we shall gain the calmness and the rest of Christ, or whether we shall be tossed by the restlessness and agitation of the world. Nay, the very vicissitudes of the seasons, day and night, heat and cold, affecting us variably, and producing exhilaration or depression, are so contrived as to conduce toward the being which we become, and decide whether we shall be masters of ourselves or whether we shall be swept at the mercy of accident and circumstance, miserably susceptible of merely outward influences. Infinite as are the varieties of life, so manifold are the paths to saintly character; and he who has not found out how directly or indirectly to make everything converge toward his soul's sanctification has as yet missed the meaning of this life.

THERE are two, only two, *perfect* humanities. One has existed already in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the other is to be found only in the collective Church. Once, only once, has God given a perfect representation of Himself, "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person." And if we ask again for a perfect humanity, the answer is, it is not in this Church or in that Church, or in this man or in that man, or in this age or in that age, but in the collective blended graces and beauties and humanities which are found in every age, in all churches, but not in every separate man. So, at least, Paul has taught us, "Till we *all* come"—*collectively*, not separately—"in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man,"—in other words, to a perfect *humanity*,—"unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

It has been said, and has since been repeated as frequently as if it were an indisputable axiom, that "happiness is our being's end and aim." Brethren, happiness is *not* our being's end and aim. The Christian's aim is perfection, not happiness; and every one of the sons of God must have something of that spirit which marked their Master; that holy sadness, that peculiar unrest, that high

and lofty melancholy which belongs to a spirit which strives after heights to which it can never attain.

If you search down into the constitution of your being till you come to the lowest deep of all, underlying all other wants you will find a craving for what is infinite,—a something that desires perfection,—a wish that nothing but the thought of that which is eternal can satisfy.

WHOEVER is satisfied with what he does has reached his culminating point; he will progress no more. Man's destiny is to be not dissatisfied, but forever unsatisfied.

SPOTLESSNESS may do for angels; repentance unto life is the highest that belongs to man.

THE hardest, the severest, the last lesson which man has to learn upon this earth, is submission to the will of God. It is the hardest lesson, because to our blinded eyesight it often seems a cruel will. It is a severe lesson, because it can be only taught by the blighting of much that has been most dear. It is the last lesson, because when a man has learned that, he is fit to be transplanted from a world of willfulness to a world in which one Will alone is loved, and only one is done. All that saintly experience ever had to teach resolves itself into this, the lesson how to say affectionately, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Slowly and stubbornly our hearts acquiesce in that.

THERE are given to us "exceeding great and precious promises," that by means of these we might be partakers of the Divine nature. Not to be equal to the standard of our day, nor even to surpass it; not to be superior to the men among whom we live; not to forgive those who have little to be forgiven; not to love our friends: but to be the children of our Father; to be pure even as Christ is pure; to be "perfect even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect."

It is easily perceivable why this perfection is unattainable in this life. Faultlessness is conceivable, being merely

the negation of evil. But perfection is positive, the attainment of all conceivable excellence. It is long as eternity—expansive as God. Perfection is our mark; yet never will the aim be so true and steady as to strike the golden center. Perfection of character; yet even to the dying hour it will be but this: "I count not myself to have apprehended." Christian life is like those questions in mathematics which never can be exactly answered. All you can attain is an approximation to the truth. You may labor on for years and never reach it; yet your labor is not in vain. Every figure you add makes the fraction nearer than the last to the million millionth; and so it is with holiness. Christ is our mark—the perfect standard of God in Christ.

GOD is love, and to love men till private attachments have expanded into a philanthropy which embraces all, at last even the evil and enemies, with compassion,—that is to love God. God is truth. To be true, to hate every form of falsehood, to live a brave, true, real life,—that is to love God. God is infinite, and to love the boundless, reaching on from grace to grace, adding charity to faith, and rising upward ever to see the ideal still above us, and to die with it unattained, aiming insatiably to be perfect even as the Father is perfect,—that is to love God.

POPULARITY.

POPULARITY is one of the things of an earthly harvest for which quite earthly qualifications are required. I say not always dishonorable qualifications, but a certain flexibility of disposition; a certain courtly willingness to sink obnoxious truths, and adapt ourselves to the prejudices of the minds of others; a certain adroitness at catching the tone of those with whom we are. Without some of these things no man can be popular in any profession.

But you have resolved to be a liver, a doer, a champion of the truth. Your ambition is to be pure in the last recesses of the mind. You have your reward: a soul upright and manly; a fearless bearing, that dreads to look no man in the face; a willingness to let men search you through and through, and defy them to see any difference

between what you seem and what you are. Now, your price: your price is dislike. The price of being true is the Cross. The warrior of the truth must not expect success. What have you to do with popularity? Sow for it, and you will have it. But if you wish for it, or wish for peace, you have mistaken your calling; you must not be a teacher of the truth; you must not cut prejudice against the grain: you must leave medical, legal, theological truth to harder and nobler men, who are willing to take the martyr's cross, and win the martyr's crown.

If you knew how sick at heart I am with the whole work of parlement, talkee, palaver, or whatever else it is called; how lightly I hold the "gift of the gab"; how grand and divine the realm of silence appears to me in comparison; how humiliated and degraded to the dust I have felt, in perceiving myself quietly taken by gods and men for the popular preacher of a fashionable watering-place; how slight the power seems to me to be given by it of winning souls; and how sternly I have kept my tongue from saying a syllable or a sentence, in pulpit or on platform, *because* it would be popular!

UNPOPULARITY or popularity is utterly worthless as a test of manhood's worth.

PRAYER.

PRAYER is a necessity of our humanity rather than a duty. To force it as a duty is dangerous. Christ did not; never commanded it, never taught it till asked. This necessity is twofold. First, the necessity of sympathy. We touch other human spirits only at a point or two. In the deepest departments of thought and feeling we are alone, and the desire to escape that loneliness finds for itself a voice in prayer.

Next, the necessity of escaping the sense of a crushing fate. The feeling that all things are fixed and unalterable, that we are surrounded by necessities which we cannot break through, is intolerable whenever it is realized. Our egotism cries against it; our innocent egotism, and the

practical reconciliation between our innocent egotism and hideous fatalism, is prayer, which realizes a living Person ruling all things with a will.

AND now one word about prayer. It is a preparation for danger, it is the armor for battle. Go not, my Christian brother, into the dangerous world without it. You kneel down at night to pray, and drowsiness weighs down your eyelids. A hard day's work is a kind of excuse, and you shorten your prayer and resign yourself softly to repose. The morning breaks, and it may be you rise late, and so your early devotions are not done, or done with irregular haste. No watching unto prayer—wakefulness once more omitted. And now we ask, is that reparable? Brethren, we solemnly believe not. There has been that done which cannot be undone. You have given up your prayer, and you will suffer for it. Temptation is before you, and you are not fit to meet it. There is a guilty feeling on the soul, and you linger at a distance from Christ. It is no marvel if that day, in which you suffer drowsiness to interfere with prayer, be a day on which you betray Him by cowardice and soft shrinking from duty. Let it be a principle through life, moments of prayer intruded upon by sloth cannot be made up. We may get experience, but we cannot get back the rich freshness and the strength which were wrapped up in these moments.

No man is in the habit of praying to God in Christ, and then doubts whether Christ is He "that should come." It is in the power of prayer to realize Christ, to bring Him near, to make you feel His life stirring like a pulse within you. Jacob could not doubt whether he had been with God when his sinew shrunk. John could not doubt whether Jesus was the Christ when the things He had done were pictured out so vividly in answer to his prayer. Let but a man live with Christ, anxious to have his own life destroyed and Christ's life established in its place, losing himself in Christ, that man will have all his misgivings silenced. These are the two remedies for doubt—activity and prayer. He who works, and *feels* he works,—he who prays, and *knows*

he prays,—has got the secret of transforming life-failure into life-victory.

HERE is a grand paradox, which is the paradox of all prayer. The heart hopes that which to reasoning seems impossible. And I believe we never pray aright except when we pray in that feminine, childlike spirit which no logic can defend, feeling *as if* we modified the will of God, though that will is fixed. It is the glory of the spirit that is affectionate and submissive that it, ay and it alone, *can* pray, because it alone can believe that its prayer will be granted; and it is the glory of that spirit, too, that its prayer will be granted.

It is a precious lesson of the cross that apparent failure is eternal victory. It is a precious lesson of this prayer that the object of prayer is not the success of its petition; nor is its rejection a proof of failure. Christ's petition was not gratified, yet He was the One well-beloved of His Father.

PRACTICALLY then, I say, pray as He did, till prayer makes you cease to pray. Pray till prayer makes you forget your own wish, and leave it or merge it in God's will. The Divine wisdom has given us prayer, not as a means whereby to obtain the good things of earth, but as a means whereby we learn to do without them; not as a means whereby we escape evil, but as a means whereby we become strong to meet it. "There appeared an angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him." That was the true reply to His prayer.

REGENERATION.

RESTORATION is the essential work of Christianity.

To be a son of God is one thing; to know that you are, and call Him Father, is another, and that is regeneration.

THE CROSS of Christ, the spirit of that sacrifice, can alone be the regeneration of the world.

PROOF of adoption is a changed heart (2 Cor. v, 17). If a man see this change in himself, it is a proof to him that he has believed, because the work of regeneration is begun — the work which God performs in the heart of all whom He has chosen, conforming them to the image of his Son (Rom. viii, 29). If he does not see this change, it is evidently because of the predominance of sin; and therefore the want of assurance springs from sin.

MORALISTS have taught us what sin is; they have explained how it twines itself into habit; they have shown us its ineffaceable character. It was reserved for Christianity to speak of restoration. Christ, and Christ only, has revealed that he who has erred may be restored, and made pure and clean and whole again.

NONE can anticipate such a heaven as God has revealed, except they that are born of the Spirit; therefore to believe that Jesus is the Christ, a man must be born of God. You will observe that no other victory overcomes the world; for this is what St. John means by saying "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ?" For then it comes to pass that a man begins to feel that to do wrong is hell, and that to love God, to be like God, to have the mind of Christ, is the only heaven. Until this victory is gained the world retains its stronghold in the heart.

Do you think that the temperate man has overcome the world, who, instead of the short-lived rapture of intoxication, chooses regular employment, health and prosperity? Is it not the world in another form which has his homage? Or do you suppose that the so-called religious man is really the world's conqueror by being content to give up seventy years of enjoyment in order to win innumerable ages of the very same species of enjoyment? Has he not only made earth a hell, in order that earthly things may be his heaven forever?

Thus the victory of faith proceeds from stage to stage: the first victory is when the present is conquered by the future; the last, when the visible and sensual is despised in comparison of the invisible and eternal. Then earth has

lost its power forever; for if *all* that it has to give be lost eternally, the gain of faith is still infinite.

RELIGION.

It is in vain that we ransack the world for probable evidences of God and hypotheses of His existence. It is idle to look into the materialism of man for the revelation of his immortality, or to examine the morbid anatomy of the body to find the rule of right. If a man go to the eternal world with convictions of eternity, the resurrection, God, already in his spirit, he will find abundant corroborations of that which he already believes. But if God's existence be not thrilling every fibre of his heart, if the immortal be not already in him as the proof of the resurrection, if the law of duty be not stamped upon his soul as an eternal truth, unquestionable, a thing that must be obeyed, quite separately from all considerations of punishment or impunity, science will never reveal these; observation pries in vain; the physician comes away from the laboratory an infidel.

And if obedience were entire and love were perfect, then would the revelation of the Spirit to the soul of man be perfect too. There would be trust expelling care, and enabling a man to repose; there would be a love which would cast out fear; there would be a sympathy with the mighty All of God. Selfishness would pass, isolation would be felt no longer; the tide of the universal and eternal Life would come with mighty pulsations throbbing through the soul. To such a man it would not matter where he was, nor what: to live or die would be alike. If he lived, he would live unto the Lord; if he died, he would die to the Lord. The bed of down surrounded by friends, or the martyr's stake girt round with curses—what matter which? Stephen, dragged, hurried, driven to death, felt the glory of God streaming on his face: when the shades of faintness were gathering round his eyes, and the world was fading away into indistinctness, "the things prepared" were given him. His spirit saw what "eye had never seen." The later martyr bathes his fingers in the flames, and while the flesh shrivels and the bones are cindered,

says, in unfeigned sincerity, that he is lying on a bed of roses. It would matter little what he was — the ruler of a kingdom, or a tailor grimed with the smoke and dust of a workshop. To a soul filled with God, the difference between these two is inappreciable — as if, from a distant star, you were to look down upon a palace and a hovel, both dwindled into distance.

WE move through a world of mystery; and the deepest question is, What is the Being that is ever near, sometimes felt, never seen; That which has haunted us from childhood with a dream of something surpassingly fair, which has never yet been realized; That which sweeps through the soul at times as a desolation, like the blast from the wings of the Angel of Death, leaving us stricken and silent in our loneliness; That which has touched us in our tenderest point, and the flesh has quivered with agony, and our mortal affections have shriveled up with pain; That which comes to us in aspirations of nobleness, and conceptions of superhuman excellence? Shall we say It or He? What is it? Who is He? Those anticipations of Immortality and God — what are they? Are they the mere throbbings of my own heart, heard and mistaken for a living something beside me? Are they the sound of my own wishes, echoing through the vast void of Nothingness? or shall I call them God, Father, Spirit, Love? A living Being within me or outside me? Tell me Thy Name, thou awful mystery of Loveliness! This is the struggle of all earnest life.

WHAT makes a man turn to God in the first instance? Unquestionably, the Spirit that is seeking him; but which is also seeking us, which requires a reciprocal effort on our part. I firmly believe that the Universal Spirit, "not far from any one of us," is seeking all; and in the union-point, where the will of the Finite is changed by and voluntarily adopts as its own, the will of the Infinite, lies the answer to the deep question you have put, "What makes a man turn to God in the first instance?" I despair of ever giving, or ever seeing given, a clearer reply than this, which leaves the matter still unfathomable; for plainly there is something in it deeper than the farthest-reaching minds have

yet penetrated. Once it was a question of torture to me, interfering with energy, and paralyzing me with the feeling of being a mere machine, acting under the delusion of spontaneousness. Now I am pretty well satisfied with the practical solution of the question, except in moments when thought works darkly, apart from action — God's own appointed eye-salve for the blinding disease of speculative tendencies. My reply (for myself sufficient) is this: Reasoning tells me I am a leaf, blown about by the breath of the spirit-wind as it listeth. I review the reasoning step by step, find no flaw in it. Nothing but a horrible predestination environs me. Every act of my past and future life, external and internal, was necessitated. The conclusion is irrefutable. I act upon this. Immediately I find that, practically, I have got wrong. I cannot act upon the idea of being fated, reft of will, without injuring my whole being. My affections are paralyzed, my actions disordered. I find, therefore, that the view which is theoretically truth, translated into conduct, becomes practically a lie. Now, on the other hand, conscience tells me I am free. I am to seek God. I am not to lie passive, waiting for the moving of the waters, but to obey a voice within me which I recognize as Divine, and which says, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." My intellect stands in contradiction to my conscience; but conscience is given me to act by. In matters of duty, therefore, I am bound to obey my conscience rather than my intellect. I believe the voice which says, "You can seek God and find Him," rather than the one which says, "Poor victim of fantasy, you cannot stir; you can only wait!" There is the best *concise* reply I can give you to your question.

RELIGION deals with men, not cases; with human hearts, not casuistry.

Christianity determines general principles, out of which, no doubt, the best government would surely spring: but what the best government is it does not determine — whether monarchy or a republic, an aristocracy or a democracy.

It lays down a great social law: "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal." But it is not its part to declare how much is just and equal. It has no

fixed scale of wages according to which masters must give. *That* it leaves to each master and each age of society.

It binds up men in a holy brotherhood. But what are the best institutions and surest means for arriving at this brotherhood it has not said. In particular, it has not pronounced whether competition or coöperation will secure it.

CONCEPTIONS of religious life, which are only conceptions outward, having no lodgment in the heart, *disappear*. Fowls of the air came and devoured the seed. Have you ever seen grain scattered on the road? The sparrow from the housetop and the chickens from the barn rush in, and within a minute after it has been scattered not the shadow of a grain is left. This is the picture, not of thought crushed by degrees, but of thought dissipated, and no man can tell when or how it went. Swiftly do these winged thoughts come, when we pray, or read, or listen; in our inattentive, sauntering, wayside hours: and before we can be upon our guard, the very trace of holier purposes has disappeared. In our purest moods, when we kneel to pray, or gather round the altar, down into the very Holy of Holies, sweep these foul birds of the air, villain fancies, demon thoughts. The germ of life, the small seed of impression, is gone.

THE world says, Resent an injury; Christ says, Forgive your enemies. If, therefore, we preach forgiveness, are we not thereby preaching Christ, even though no distinct mention may be made of his Divinity or of the doctrine of the Atonement? The world says, Indulge your inclinations: Christ says, Be pure in the last recesses of your mind. He, then, who lives a pure life is teaching Christ, even though he may not on every occasion name Him. In the Sermon on the Mount there is contained no reference to any one special doctrine of Christianity, as we should call it; nor in the Epistle of St. James is there found one word respecting the doctrine of the Atonement; but if we take this sermon or this epistle, and simply work out the truths therein contained—tell us, are we not thereby preaching Christ? To preach goodness, mercy, truth, not for the

bribe of heaven or from the fear of hell, but in the name of God the Father, is to preach Christ.

It was necessary that one should come who should be true, the truest of all that are woman-born, whose life was truth, who from everlasting had been the Truth. It was necessary that He should come to preach the gospel to the poor, to dare to say to the people some truths which the philosophers dared not say, and other truths of which no philosopher had dreamed. The penalty of that true life was the sacrifice which is the world's atonement. Men saw the mortal die. But others saw the immortal rise to take his place at the right hand of power; and the spirit which has been streaming out ever since from that life and death is the world's present light, and shall be its everlasting life.

WE live surrounded by Christian institutions, breathe an atmosphere saturated by Christianity. It is exceedingly difficult even to imagine another state of things. In the enjoyment of domestic purity, it is difficult to conceive the debasing effects of polygamy; in the midst of political liberty, to conceive of the blighting power of slavery; in scientific progress, to imagine mental stagnation; in religious liberty and free goodness, to fancy the reign of superstition.

Yet to realize the blessings of health we must sit by the sick-bed; to feel what light is we must descend into the mine, and see the emaciated forms which dwindle away in darkness; to know what the blessing of sunshine is, go down into the valleys where stunted vegetation and dim vapors tell of a scene on which the sun scarcely shines two hours in the day; and to know what we have from Christianity, it is well to cast the eyes sometimes over the darkness from which the advent of Christ redeemed us.

I KNOW that there are men who once wandered in darkness and doubt, and could find no light, who have now found an anchor and a rock and a resting-place. I know that there are men who were feeling bitterly and angrily what seemed to them the unfair differences of society, who now regard them in a gentle, more humble and more tender

spirit. I know that there are rich who have been led to feel more generously toward the poor. I know that there are poor who have been taught to feel more truly and more fairly toward the rich. I *believe*—for on such a point God only can *know*—that there are men who have been induced to place before themselves a higher standard, and, perhaps, I may venture to add, have conformed their lives more truly to that standard.

THERE comes to each man a crisis in his destiny, when evil influences have been removed, or some strong impression made,—after an illness or an escape, or in some season of solitary thoughtfulness or disappointment. It were an awful thing to watch such a spirit, if we knew that he is on the trial now, by which his everlasting destiny is to be decided. It were more awful still to see a man who has passed the time of grace and reached the time of blindness, and to know that the light is quenched forever,—that he will go on as before, and live many years and play his part in life, but that the Spirit of God will come back to that soul no more forever.

IN the pursuit of wealth, knowledge, or reputation, circumstances have power to mar the wisest schemes. The hoard of years may be lost in a single night. The wisdom hived up by a whole life may perish when some fever impairs memory. But in the kingdom of Christ, where inward *character* is the prize, no chance can rob earnestness of its exactly proportioned due of success. "*Whatsoever* a man soweth, that shall he also reap." There is no blight, nor mildew, nor scorching sun, nor rain-deluge, which can turn that harvest into a failure. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." * * * Sow for time, and *probably* you will succeed in time. Sow the seeds of life—humbleness, pure-heartedness, love; and in the long eternity which lies before the soul every minutest grain will come up again with an increase of thirty, sixty or a hundred fold.

WHAT is religion but fuller life? To live in the Spirit, what is it but to have keener feelings and mightier powers—to rise into a higher consciousness of life? What is

religion's self but feeling? The highest form of religion is charity. Love is of God, and he that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. This is an intense feeling,—too intense to be excited; profound in its calmness, yet it rises at times in its higher flights into that ecstatic life which glances in a moment intuitively through ages. These are the pentecostal hours of our existence, when the Spirit comes as a mighty rushing wind, in cloven tongues of fire, filling the soul with God.

So far as a man feels that eternity is long, time short, so far he is a child of light. So far as he believes the body nothing in comparison with the soul, the present in comparison with the future; so far as he has felt the power of sin and the sanctifying power of the death of Christ, so far as he comprehends the character of God as exhibited in Jesus Christ,—he is a child of light.

RELIGION differs from morality in the value which it places on the affections. Morality requires that an act be done on principle. Religion goes deeper, and inquires into the state of the heart. The church of Ephesus was unsuspected in her orthodoxy, and unblemished in her zeal; but to the ear of him who saw the apocalyptic vision a voice spake: "I have somewhat against thee in that thou hast left thy first love."

HE alone believes truth who feels it; he alone has a religion whose soul knows by experience that to serve God and know Him is the richest treasure. And unless truth come to you, not in word only, but in power besides,—authoritative because true, not true because authoritative,—there has been no real revelation made to you from God.

THESE are "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Compared with these, what are loveliness, the eloquent utterances of man, the conceptions of the heart of genius? What are they all to the serene stillness of a spirit lost in love; the full deep rapture of a soul into which the Spirit of God is pouring itself in a mighty tide of revelation?

EVERY moment of delay adds bitterness to after struggles. The moment of a feeling of hired servitude must come. If a man will not obey God with a warm heart, he may hereafter have to do it with a cold one. To be holy is the work of a long life.

I WILL tell you of a want I am beginning to experience very distinctly. I perceive more than ever the necessity of devotional reading: I mean the works of eminently holy persons, whose tone was not merely uprightness of character and high-mindedness, but communion—a strong sense of personal and ever-living communion—with God besides.

THERE are two kinds of life,—one of the flesh, another of the spirit. Amidst the animal and selfish desires of our nature there is a voice which clearly speaks of duty, right, perfection. This is the spirit of Deity in man; it is the life of God in the soul; this is the evidence of our Divine parentage.

REMORSE.

PERNICIOUS as have been the consequences of self-righteousness, more destructive still have been the consequences of remorse. If self-righteousness has slain its thousands, remorse has slain its tens of thousands; for, indisputably, self-righteousness secures a man from degradation. Have you never wondered at the sure walk of those persons who, to trust their own estimate of themselves, are always right? They never sin; their children are better brought up than any other children; their conduct is irreproachable. Pride saves them from a fall. That element of self-respect, healthful always, is their safeguard. Yes, the Pharisee was right. He is not an extortioner, nor unjust, and he is regular in his payments and his duties. That was self-righteousness: it kept him from saintliness, but it saved him from degradation, too. Remorse, on the contrary, crushes. If a man lose the world's respect, he can retreat back upon the consciousness of the God within; but if a man lose his own respect, he sinks down and down, and deeper yet, until he can get it back again by feeling that he is sublimely loved, and he dares at last to respect

that which God vouchsafes to care for. Remorse is like the clog of an insoluble debt: the debtor is proverbially extravagant,—one more, and one more, expense. What can it matter when the great bankruptcy is near? And so, in the same way, one sin, and one more. Why not? Why should he pause when all is hopeless? What is one added to that which is already infinite?

HELL is not merely a thing hereafter, hell is a thing here; hell is not a thing banished to the far distance, it is ubiquitous as conscience. Wherever there is a worm of undying remorse, the sense of having done wrong, and a feeling of degradation, there is hell begun. And now respecting this: these words, "banishment from God," "alienation," though merely popular phrases, are expressions of a deep truth.

PAST guilt lies behind us, and is well forgotten. There is a way in which even sin may be banished from the memory. If a man looks forward to the evil he is going to commit, and satisfies himself that it is inevitable, and so treats it lightly, he is acting as a fatalist. But if a man partially does this, looking backward feeling that sin when it is past has become part of the history of God's universe, and is not to be wept over forever, he only does that which the Giver of the Gospel permits him to do. Bad as the results have been in the world of making light of sin, those of brooding over it too much have been worse. Remorse has done more harm than even hardihood. It was remorse which fixed Judas in an unalterable destiny; it was remorse which filled the monasteries for ages with men and women whose lives became useless to their fellow-creatures; it is remorse which so remembers hygone faults as to paralyze the energies for doing Christ's work; for when you break a Christian's spirit, it is all over with progress. Oh, we want everything that is hopeful and encouraging for our work, for God knows it is not an easy one. And therefore it is that the Gospel comes to the guiltiest of us all at the very outset with the inspiring news of pardon.

RESPONSIBILITY.

THERE is a tendency in the masses always to think, not what is true, but what is respectable, correct, orthodox. Is that authorized? we ask. It comes partly from cowardice, partly from indolence; from habit, from imitation, from the uncertainty and darkness of all moral truths, and the dread of timid minds to plunge into the investigation of them. Now, truth known and believed respecting God and man frees from this, by warning of individual responsibility. But responsibility is personal; it cannot be delegated to another, and thrown off upon a church. Before God, face to face, each soul must stand to give account.

THE aim was to make all men free. He saw around Him servitude in every form,—man in slavery to man, and race to race; His own countrymen in bondage to the Romans,—slaves both of Jewish and Roman masters, frightfully oppressed; men trembling before priestcraft; and those who were politically and ecclesiastically free in worse bondage still,—the rich and rulers slaves to their own passions.

Conscious of His inward Deity and of His Father's intentions, He, without hurry, without the excitement which would mark the mere earthly liberator, calmly said, "Ye shall be free."

REST.

THAT which is rest to one man is not rest to another. To require the illiterate man to read his Bible for some hours would impose a toil upon him, though it might be a relaxation to you. To the laboring man a larger proportion of the day must be given to the recreation of his physical nature than is necessary for the man of leisure, to whom the spiritual observance of the day is easy, and seems all. Let us learn large, charitable considerateness.

It is the deepest want in the soul of man. If you take off covering after covering of the nature which wraps him round, till you come to the central heart of hearts, deep lodged there you find the requirement of repose. All men

do not hanker after pleasure,—all men do not crave intellectual food. But all men long for rest; the most restless that ever pursued a turbulent career on earth did by that career only testify to the need of the soul within. They craved for something which was not given; there was a thirst which was not slaked. That very restlessness betokened that—restless because not at rest. It is this need which sometimes makes the quiet of the grave an object of such deep desire: “There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest.” It is this which creates the chief desirableness of heaven: “There remaineth a rest for the people of God.” And it is this which, consciously or unconsciously, is the real wish that lies at the bottom of all others. Oh, for tranquillity of heart—heaven’s profound silence in the soul,—“a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price!”

THE eventide, in which instinctively Jacob went into the fields to meditate,—when the work of the day is done, when the mind has ceased its tension, when the passions are lulled to rest in spite of themselves by the spell of the quiet, starlit sky,—it is then, amidst the silence of the lull of all the lower parts of our nature, that the soul comes forth to do its work. Then the peculiar, strange work of the soul which the intellect cannot do, meditation, begins. Awe, and worship, and wonder, are in full exercise; and Love begins then in its purest form of mystic adoration and pervasive and undefined tenderness—separate from all that is coarse and earthly,—swelling as if it would embrace the All in its desire to bless, and lose itself in the sea of the love of God. This is the Rest of the soul, the *exercise* and play of all the nobler powers.

RESURRECTION.

RESURRECTION is not one of those questions on which you can afford to wait,—it is the question of life and death. There are times when it does not weigh heavily. When we have some keen pursuit before us, when we are young enough to be satisfied to enjoy ourselves, the problem does not press itself. We are too laden with the pressure of the

present to care to ask what is coming. But at last a time comes when we feel it will be all over soon,—that much of our time is gone, and the rest swiftly going. And let a man be as frivolous as he will at heart, it is a question too solemn to be put aside, whether he is going down into extinction and the blank of everlasting silence or not; whether in those far ages, when the very oak which is to form his coffin shall have become fibres of black mould, and the churchyard in which he is to lie shall have become perhaps unconsecrated ground, and the spades of a generation yet unborn shall have exposed his bones, those bones will be the last relic in the world to bear record that he once trod this green earth, and that life was once dear to him, Thomas, or James, or Paul; or whether that thrilling, loving, thinking something, that he calls himself, has indeed within it an indestructible existence which shall still be conscious when everything else shall have rushed into endless wreck. Oh, in the awful earnestness of a question such as that, a speculation and a peradventure will not do, we must have proof. The honest doubt of Thomas craves a sign as much as the cold doubt of the Sadducee.

IN this strange world of perpetual change we are met by many resemblances to a resurrection. Without much exaggeration we call them resurrections. There is the resurrection of the moth from the grave of the chrysalis. For many ages the sculptured butterfly was the type and emblem of immortality. Because it passes into a state of torpor or deadness, and because from that it emerges by a kind of resurrection—the same, yet not the same—in all the radiance of a fresh and beautiful youth, never again to be supported by the coarse substance of earth, but destined henceforth to nourish its etherealized existence on the nectar of the flowers, the ancients saw in that transformation a something added to their hopes of immortality. It was their beautiful symbol of the soul's indestructibility.

LET any one go into the fields at this spring season of the year; let him mark the busy preparations for life which are going on. Life is at work in every emerald bud, in the bursting bark of every polished bough, in the green-

ing tints of every brown hillside. A month ago everything was as still and cold as the dead silence which chills the heart in the highest regions of the glacier solitudes. Life is coming back to a dead world. It is a resurrection, surely. The return of freshness to the frozen world is not less marvelous than the return of sensibility to a heart which has ceased to beat. If one has taken place, the other is not impossible.

THE Egyptian mode of sepulture was embalming, and the Hebrews, too, attached much importance to the body after death. Joseph commanded his countrymen to preserve his bones to take away with them. In this we detect that unmistakable human craving, not only for immortality, but immortality associated with a form. No doubt the Egyptian feeling was carried out absurdly. They tried to redeem from the worm the very aspect that had been worn, the very features they had loved; and there was a kind of feeling that while that mummy lasted the man had not yet perished from earth. They expected that, in process of years, it would again be animated by its spirit.

Now, Christianity does not disappoint, but rather meets, that feeling. It grants all that the materialist, and all that the spiritualist, have a right to ask. It grants to the materialist, by the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, that future life shall be associated with a material form. Leaving untouched all the questions which may be raised about the identity of the atoms that have been buried, it simply pronounces that the spirit shall have a body. It grants to the spiritualist all he ought to wish, that the spirit shall be free from evil. For it is a mistake of ultra-spiritualism to connect degradation with the thought of a risen body, or to suppose that a mind unbound by the limitations of space is a more spiritual idea of resurrection than the other. The opposite to spirituality is not materialism, but sin. The form of matter does not degrade. For what is this world itself but the form of Deity, whereby the manifoldness of His mind and Beauty manifests, and wherein it clothes itself? It is idle to say that spirit can exist apart from form. We do not know that it can. Perhaps even the

Eternal Himself is more closely bound to His works than our philosophical systems have conceived. Perhaps matter is only a mode of thought. At all events, all that we know or can know of mind exists in union with form. The resurrection of the body is the Christian verity, which meets and satisfies those cravings of the ancient Egyptian mind that expressed themselves in the process of embalming, and the religious reverence felt for the very bones of the departed by the Hebrews.

THE caterpillar passes into the butterfly, the snow-drop dies to rise again, spring leaps to life from the arms of winter, and the world rejoices in its resurrection. God gives us all this merciful assistance to our faith. But it is not on these grounds that our belief rests. These are not our proofs, they are only corroborations and illustrations; for it does not follow with certainty that the body of man shall be restored, because the chrysalis, an apparent corpse, still lives. No, we fetch our proofs from the Word of God and the nature of the human soul; and we fetch our probabilities and illustrations from the suggestive world of types which lie all around us.

RETRIBUTION.

By punishment is simply meant the penalty annexed to transgression of a law. Punishment is of two kinds,—the penalty which follows ignorant transgression, and the chastisement which ensues upon willful disobedience. The first of these is called imputed guilt, the second is actual guilt. By imputed guilt is meant, in theological language, that a person is treated as if he were guilty. If, for example, you approach too near the whirling wheel of steam machinery, the mutilation which follows is the punishment of temerity. If the traveler ignorantly lays his hand on the cockatrice's den, the throb of the envenomed fang is the punishment of his ignorance. He has broken a law of nature, and the guilt of the infraction is imputed to him,—there is penalty, but there is none of the chastisement which follows sin. His conscience is not made miserable, he only suffers. Further, according to the con-

stitution of this world, it is not only our own transgressions of ignorance, but besides the faults of others, which bring pain and sorrow on us. The man of irritable and miserably nervous temperament owes that often to a father's intemperance. Many a man has to struggle all his life with the penury which he reaps as the harvest of a distant ancestor's extravagance. In the strictest sense of the word these are punishments, the consequences annexed to transgression, and in the language of theology they are called imputed guilt; but there is an all-important distinction between them and the chastisements of personal iniquity. If a man suffer ill-health or poverty, as the results of his own misconduct, his conscience forces him to refer this to the wrath of God. He is reaping as he had sown, and the miseries of conscious fault are added to his penalty; but if such things come as the penalty of the wrong of others, then, though philosophically you may call them punishment, in the popular sense of the word they are no punishment at all, but rather corrective discipline,—nay, even richest blessings if they are received from a Father's hand, and transmuted by humbleness into the means of spiritual growth.

HELL is the infinite terror of the soul, whatever that may be. To one man it is pain: rid him of that, he can bear all degradation. To another it is public shame: save him from that, and he will creep and crawl before you to submit to any reptile meanness. "Honor me now, I pray thee, before the people," till Samuel turns from the abject thing in scorn. To others, the infinite terror is *that* compared with which all these would be a bed of roses. It is the hell of having done wrong; the hell of having had a spirit from God, pure, with high aspirations, and to be conscious of having dulled its delicacy and degraded its desires; the hell of having quenched a light brighter than the sun's,—of having done to another an injury that through time and through eternity never can be undone; infinite, maddening remorse; the hell of knowing that every chance of excellence, and every opportunity of good, has been lost forever. This is the infinite terror: this is wrath to come.

THIS is the very basis of all natural religion—the idea of the connection between guilt and retribution. In some form or other it underlies all mythologies: the sleepless, never-dying avengers of wrong; the Nemesis who presides over retribution; the vengeance which suffereth not the murderer to live; the whips and scorpions of the Furies. It seems the first instinct of religion.

THERE is such a thing as being salted with fire, a never annihilating but still consuming torture. You may escape the viper and the wreck; you may by prudence make this world painless, more or less; you cannot escape yourself. Go where you will, you carry with you a soul degraded, its power lost, its finer sensibilities destroyed. Worse than the viper's tooth is the punishment of no longer striving after goodness, or aspiring after the life of God. Just as the man cannot see through the glass on which he breathes, sin darkens the windows of the soul. You cannot look out even to know the glories of the fair world from which your soul excludes itself. There is no punishment equal to the punishment of being base. To sink from sin to sin, from infamy to infamy,—that is the fearful retribution which is executed in the spiritual world. You are safe, go where you will, from the viper,—as safe as if you were the holiest of God's children. The fang is in your soul.

EVERY law has its own appropriate penalty; and the wonder of it is, that often the severest penalty seems set against the smallest transgression. We suffer more for our vices than our crimes; we pay dearer for our imprudences than even for our deliberate wickedness.

THERE is no *perhaps*. These are things which will be hereafter. You cannot alter the eternal laws. You cannot put your hand in the flame and not be burnt. You cannot sin in the body and escape the sin; for it goes inward, becomes part of you, and is itself the penalty which cleaves forever and ever to your spirit. Sow in the flesh, and you will reap corruption. Yield to passion, and it becomes your tyrant and your torment. Be sensual, self-indulgent, indolent, worldly, hard,—oh! they all have their corresponding penalties: "Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap."

REVELATION.

NEVER yet hath the eye seen the Truths of God; but then never shall it see them. In heaven this shall be as true as now. Shape and color give them not. God will never be visible, nor will His blessedness. He has no form. The pure in heart will see Him, but never with the eye; only in the same way, but in a different degree, that they see Him now. In the anticipated Vision of the Eternal, what do you expect to see,—a shape?—hues? You will never behold God. Eye hath not seen, and never shall see, in finite form, the Infinite One, nor the Infinite of feeling or of truth.

SCIENCE cannot give a revelation. Science proceeds upon observation. It submits everything to the experience of the senses. Its law, expounded by its great lawgiver, is, that if you would ascertain its truth you must see, feel, taste. Experiment is the test of truth. Now, you cannot, by searching, find out the Almighty to perfection, nor a single one of the blessed truths He has to communicate.

No, it is vain that we ransack the world for probable evidences of God, and hypotheses of His existence. It is idle to look into the materialism of man for the revelation of his immortality; or to examine the morbid anatomy of the body to find the rule of right. If a man go to the eternal world with convictions of Eternity, the Resurrection, God, already in his spirit, he will find abundant corroborations of that which he already believes. But if God's existence be not thrilling every fibre of his heart, if the Immortal be not already in him as the proof of the Resurrection, if the law of duty be not stamped upon his soul as an Eternal Truth, unquestionable,—a thing that must be obeyed, quite separately from all considerations of punishment or impunity,—science will never reveal these: observation pries in vain; the physician comes away from the laboratory an infidel. Eye hath not seen the truths which are clear enough to Love and to the Spirit.

God gave His revelation in parts, piecemeal, as you teach a child to spell a word,—letter by letter, syllable by syllable, adding all at last together. God had a Word to spell—His own name. By degrees He did it; at last it came entire: the Word was made flesh.

REVERENCE.

REVERENCE is deeply rooted in the heart of humanity: you cannot tear it out. Civilization, science, progress, only change its direction, they do not weaken its force. If it no longer bows before crucifixes and candles, priests and relics, it is not extinguished toward what is truly sacred and what is priestly in man. The fiercest revolt against false authority is only a step toward submission to rightful authority. Emancipation from false lords only sets the heart free to honor true ones. The free-born David will not do homage to Nabal.

REWARD.

I SAY this is a spurious goodness which is good for the sake of reward. The child that speaks truth for the sake of the praise of truth is not truthful. The man who is honest because honesty is the best policy has not integrity in his heart. He who endeavors to be humble, and holy, and perfect, in order to win heaven, has only a counterfeit religion. God for His own sake—Goodness because it is good—Truth because it is lovely,—this is the Christian's aim. The prize is only an incentive; inseparable from success, but not the aim itself.

THE sowers of earth *have* their harvest here: Success in their schemes—quiet, intellectual enjoyment—exemption from pain and loss—the fruits of worldly-wise sagacity; and that is all. “When the breath goeth forth they return to their dust, and all their thoughts perish.” The grave is not to them the gate of paradise, but simply the impressive mockery which the hand of death writes upon that body for which they lived, and with which all is gone. They reap corruption, for all they have toiled for decays!

It is a Christian duty to dwell much more on the thought of future blessedness than most men do. If ever the apostle's step began to flag, the radiant diadem before him gave new vigor to his heart; and we know how at the close of his career the vision became more vivid and more entrancing: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory!" It is our privilege, if we are on our way to God, to keep steadily before us the thought of Home. Make it a matter of habit. Force yourself at night, alone, in the midst of the world's bright sights, to pause to think of the heaven which is yours. Let it calm you and ennoble you, and give you cheerfulness to endure. It was so that Moses was enabled to live among all the fascinations of his courtly life, with a heart unseduced from his laborious destiny. By faith * * * "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Why? "For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." It was so that our Master strengthened His Human Soul for its sharp earthly endurance. "For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame." If we would become heavenly-minded, we must let the imagination realize the blessedness to which we are moving on. Let us think much of rest,—the rest which is not of indolence, but of powers in perfect equilibrium; the rest which is deep as summer midnight, yet full of life and force as summer sunshine, the Sabbath of Eternity. Let us think of the love of God, which we shall feel in its full tide upon our souls. Let us think of that marvelous career of sublime occupation which shall belong to the spirits of just men made perfect; when we shall fill a higher place in God's universe, and more consciously, and with more distinct insight, coöperate with God in the rule over His Creation. "I press toward the mark—for the prize."

THE reward is not arbitrary, but natural. God's rewards and God's punishments are all natural. Distinguish between arbitrary and natural. Death is an arbitrary punishment for forgery: it might be changed for transportation. It is not naturally connected; it depends upon the will of the law-maker. But trembling nerves are the direct and natural results of intemperance. They are, in

the order of nature, the results of wrong doing. The man reaps *what* he has sown. Similarly in rewards. If God gave riches in return for humbleness, that would be an arbitrary connection. He did give such a reward to Solomon. But when He gives life eternal, meaning by life eternal, not duration of existence, but heavenly quality of existence, as explained already, it is all natural. The seed sown in the ground contains in itself the future harvest: the harvest is but the development of the germ of life in the seed. A holy act strengthens the inward holiness: it is a seed of life growing into more life. "Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he reap." He that sows much, thereby becomes more conformed to God than he was before, in heart and spirit: that is his reward and harvest. And just as among the apostles there was one whose spirit, attuned to love, made him emphatically the disciple whom Jesus loved, so shall there be some who, by previous discipline of the Holy Ghost, shall have more of His mind, and understand more of His love, and drink deeper of His joy, than others,—they that have sowed bountifully.

Every act done in Christ receives its exact and appropriate reward. They that are meek shall inherit the earth: they that are pure shall see God: they that suffer shall reign with Him: they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever: they that receive a righteous man in the name of a righteous man,—that is, because he is a righteous man,—shall receive a righteous man's reward. Even the cup of cold water, given in the name of Christ, shall not lose its reward.

SABBATH.

PHYSIOLOGISTS have demonstrated the necessity of cessation from toil: they have urged the impossibility of perpetual occupation without end. Pictures, with much pathos in them, have been placed before us describing the hard fate of those on whom no Sabbath dawns. It has been demanded as a right, entreated as a mercy, on behalf of the laboring man, that he should have one day in seven for recreation of his bodily energies. All well and true, but there is a great deal more than this. He who confines his conception

of the need of rest to that has left man on a level with the brutes. Let a man take merely lax and liberal notions of the fourth commandment: let him give his household and dependents immunity from toil, and wish for himself and them no more,—he will find that there is a something wanting still. Experience tells us, after a trial, that those Sundays are the happiest, the purest, the most rich in blessing, in which the spiritual part has been most attended to; those in which the business letter was put aside till evening, and the profane literature not opened, and the ordinary occupations entirely suspended; those in which, as in the temple of Solomon, the sound of the earthly hammer has not been heard in the temple of the soul.

THERE is in the Sabbath that which is shadowy and that which is substantial; that which is transient and that which is permanent; that which is temporal and typical and that which is eternal:—the shadow and the body.

You may abrogate the formal rule, but you cannot abrogate the needs of your own soul. Eternal as the constitution of the soul of man is the necessity for the existence of a day of rest.

I AM persuaded that the Sabbath must rest not on an enactment, but on the necessities of human nature. It is necessary not because it is commanded, but it is commanded because it is necessary. If the Bible says "Eat the herb of the field," self-sustenance does not become a duty in consequence of the enactment, but the enactment is only a statement of the law of human nature. And so with the Sabbath, and this appears to be a truer and a far more impregnable base to place it on. For as to the enactment, great part of it is indisputably dispensed with. The day, the mode of observance, the manner of computing the twenty-four hours from twelve to twelve, or from sunset to sunset,—if these be ceremonial, who is to prove that the number one in seven is not ceremonial too, and that it might not be changed for one in ten? If all this is got rid of, and "no manner of work" is construed to permit hot dinners and fly-driving on the Sabbath, then it is only an arbitrary dis-

tion to call any other part of it, or even the whole of it, of moral and eternal instead of ceremonial obligation. You cannot base it on a law, but you can show that the law was based on an eternal fitness. There I think it never can be dislodged.

SKEPTICISM.

THE reaction from superstition is infidelity. The reaction from ultra-strictness is laxity. The reaction from Pharisaism was the Sadducee; and the Sadducee, with a dreadful daring, had had the firmness to say, "Well, then, there is no life to come: that is settled. I have looked into the abyss without trembling: there is no phantom there. There is neither angel, spirit, nor life to come. And this glorious thing, man, with his deep thoughts and his great, unsatisfied heart, his sorrows and his loves, godlike and immortal as he seems, is but dust animated for a time, passing into the nothingness out of which he came." That cold and hopeless creed was the creed of Sadduceeism. Human souls were trying to live on that, and find it enough.

AND skepticism, will it rock the conscience with an everlasting lullaby? Will it make, with all its reasonings, the tooth of the worm less sharp, and the fire less fierce that smoulders inwardly? Let but the plain, true man speak. We ask from him no rhetoric; we require no eloquence. Let him but say, in his earnestness, Repent—or—Wrath to come,—and then what has infidelity to fall back upon?

There is rest in this world nowhere except in Christ, the Manifested Love of God. Trust in excellence, and the better you become the keener is the feeling of deficiency. Wrap up all in doubt, and there is a stern voice that will thunder at last out of the wilderness upon your dream.

A heart renewed—a loving heart—a penitent and humble heart—a heart broken and contrite, purified by love,—that, and only that, is the rest of man. Spotlessness may do for angels: Repentance unto Life is the highest that belongs to man.

Now look at all this without Christ, and tell us whether it be possible to escape such misgivings, and such reason-

ings as these which rise out of such an aspect of things. Man, this thing of yesterday, which sprung out of the eternal nothingness,—why may he not sink, after he has played his appointed part, into nothingness again? You see the leaves sinking one by one in autumn, till the heaps below are rich with the spoils of a whole year's vegetation. They were bright and perfect while they lasted, each leaf a miracle of beauty and contrivance. There is no resurrection for the leaves, why must there be one for man? Go and stand some summer evening by the river side: you will see the Mayfly sporting out its little hour, in dense masses of insect life, darkening the air a few feet above the gentle swell of the water. The heat of that very afternoon brought them into existence. Every gauze wing is traversed by ten thousand fibres which defy the microscope to find a flaw in their perfection. The Omniscience and the care bestowed upon that exquisite anatomy, one would think, cannot be destined to be wasted in a moment. Yet so it is: when the sun has sunk between the trees, its little life is done. Yesterday it was not: to-morrow it will not be. God has bidden it be happy for one evening: it has no right or claim to a second, and in the universe that marvelous life has appeared once and will appear no more. May not the race of man sink like the generations of the Mayfly? Why cannot the Creator, so lavish in His resources, afford to annihilate souls as he annihilates insects?

Would it not almost enhance His glory to believe it?

That, brethren, is the question; and Nature has no reply. The fearful secret of sixty centuries has not yet found a voice. The whole evidence lies before us. We know what the greatest and wisest have had to say in favor of an immortality; and we know how, after eagerly devouring all their arguments, our hearts have sunk back in cold disappointment, and to every proof as we read our lips have replied mournfully, *that* will not stand. Search through tradition, history, the world within you and the world without,—except in Christ there is not the shadow of a shade of proof that man survives the grave.

SEE what these skeptics require us to believe,—that all those who have shed a sunshine upon earth, and whose

affections were so pure and good that they seemed to tell you of an eternity, perished utterly, as the selfish and impure! You are required to believe that those who died in the field of battle, bravely giving up their lives for others, died even as the false and the coward dies. You are required to believe that, when there arose a great cry at midnight, and the wreck went down, they who passed out of the world with the oath of blasphemy, or the shriek of despair, shared the same fate with those who calmly resigned their departing spirits into their Father's hand, with nothing but an awful silence to greet them, like that which greeted the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel! You are required to believe that the pure and wise of this world have all been wrong, and the selfish and sensual all right. If from this you shrink as from a thing derogatory to God, then there remains but that conclusion to which St. Paul conducts us: "Now is Christ risen from the dead." The spiritual resurrection is but the mere foretaste and pledge of the literal. Let us, brethren, seek to rise with Christ above this world and our own selves, for every act tells on that eternity, every thought and every word reap an everlasting harvest.

YOUNG men are prone to consider skepticism a proof of strong-mindedness,—a something to be proud of. Let Pilate be a specimen,—and a wretched one he is. He had clear-mindedness enough to be dissatisfied with all the views he knew; enough to see through and scorn the squabbles and superstitions of priests and bigots. All well, if from doubt of falsehood he had gone on to a belief in a higher truth; but doubt, when it left him doubting—why, the noblest opportunity man ever had, that of saving the Saviour, he missed: he became a thing for the people to despise, and after ages to pity. And that is skepticism. Call you that a manly thing?

To believe is to be happy: to doubt is to be wretched.

DOUBT cramps energy: belief is power. Only so far as a man believes strongly, mightily, can he act cheerfully, or do anything that is worth the doing.

I speak to those who have learned to hold cheap the threats wherewith priests and people would terrify into ac-

quiescence,—to those who are beyond the appeal of fear, and can only yield, if at all, to higher motives. Young men, the only manly thing, the only strong thing, is faith. It is not so far as a man doubts, but so far as he believes, that he can achieve or perfect anything. “All things are possible to *him that believeth.*”

I CAN conceive a severe science compelling a mind step by step to the atheistic conclusions; and that mind, loyal to truth, refusing to ignore the conclusions or to hide them. But then I can only conceive this done in a noble sadness, and a kind of divine infinite pity toward the race which are so bereft of their best hopes; and have no patience with a self-complacent smirk which says, “Shut up the prophets; read Martineau and Atkinson. Friendship, Patriotism, are mesmerized brain; Faith, a mistake of the stomach; Love, a titillatory movement occurring in the upper part of the nape of the neck; Immortality, the craving of dyspepsia; God, a fancy produced by a certain pressure upon the gray parts of the hasty-pudding within the skull; Shakspeare, Plato, Hannibal, and all they did and wrote, weighed by an extra ounce or two of said pudding.”

INFIDELITY is the vaguest of all charges. None is more freely, or more wantonly, or more cruelly hurled by man against man. Infidelity is often only the unmeaning accusation brought by timid persons, half-conscious of the instability of their own belief, and furious against every one whose words make them tremble at their own insecurity. It is sometimes the cry of narrowness against an old truth under a new and more spiritual form. Sometimes it is the charge caught up at a second-hand, and repeated as a kind of religious hue and cry, in profoundest ignorance of the opinions that are so characterized. Nothing is more melancholy than to listen to the wild, indiscriminate charges of Skepticism, Mysticism, Pantheism, Rationalism, Atheism, which are made by some of the weakest of mankind, who scarcely know the difference between Mesmerism and Mysticism. I hold it a Christian duty to abstain from this foolish and wicked system of labeling men with names; to stand aloof from every

mob, religious or irreligious in name, which resembles that mob at Ephesus who shouted for two long hours, the more part knowing not wherefore they were come together.

When the most spiritual minds of the sixteenth century protested against Rome, Protestantism was called infidelity. Eighteen centuries ago the Christians were burned at the stake under the name of Atheists. The Athenians poisoned their noblest man as an Atheist. Only a few weeks ago I saw one of the most precious works of one of the wisest of the Christian philosophers of England — Samuel Taylor Coleridge — denounced as the most pestilential work of our day, by one of those miserable publications miscalled religious newspapers, whose unhallowed work it seems to be on earth to point out to its votaries whom they ought to suspect instead of whom they ought to love, and to sow the seeds of dissension, malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness. Nay, I cannot but remember that, in bygone years, One whose whole life was one continued prayer, the sum and substance of whose teaching was love to God and love to man, was crucified by the bigots of his day as a Sabbath-breaker, a blasphemer, and a revolutionist. Therefore I refuse to thunder out indiscriminate anathemas to-night. Real infidelity is a fearful thing, but I have learned to hold the mere *charge* of infidelity very cheap. And I earnestly would impress on all the duty of being cautious in the use of these charges. Give a man the name of Atheist, hint that he is verging upon infidelity, and the man is doomed; doomed as surely as the wretched animal which is pursued by the hue and cry of bad boys, and which, driven from street to street, maddened by the ceaseless rattle of the tin appended to him, expires at last, gasping, furious, amidst the shrieks of old women and the stones of terrified passengers, who are all the more savage in proportion to their terror; for cowardice is always cruel.

Again, I abstain from denunciation because not infrequently even that which professes to be infidelity is disbelief, not of God, but of the character which men have given of God; opposition to the name of Christ, but not to the Spirit of Christ; hatred rather of the portrait by which his followers have represented him.

DOUBTS can only be dispelled by that kind of active life that realizes Christ. And there is no faith that gives a victory so steadily triumphant as that. When such a man comes near the opening of the vault, it is no world of sorrows he is entering upon. He is only going to see things that he has felt, for he has been living in heaven. He has his grasp on things that other men are only groping after and touching now and then. Live above this world, brethren, and then the powers of the world to come are so upon you that there is no room for doubt.

THERE is an infidelity with which no good man should have any sympathy. There are infidels who are such, knowing what they oppose. There are men who, in no mistake, know the difference between good and evil, and, distinctly knowing it, choose the evil and reject the good. But there is a state *called* infidelity which deserves compassion rather than indignation,—the dreadful state of one who craves light and cannot find it. I do think the way we treat that state is most unpardonably cruel. It is an awful moment when the soul begins to find that the props on which it has blindly rested so long are, many of them, rotten, and begins to suspect them all; when it begins to feel the nothingness of many of the traditionary opinions which have been received with implicit confidence, and in that horrible insecurity begins also to doubt whether there be anything to believe at all. It is an awful hour—let him who has passed through it say how awful—when this life has lost its meaning, and seems shriveled into a span; when the grave appears to be the end of all, human goodness nothing but a name, and the sky above this universe a dead expanse, black with the void from which God Himself has disappeared. In that fearful loneliness of spirit, when those who should have been his friends and counselors only frown upon his misgivings, and profanely bid him stifle doubts, which for aught he knows may arise from the fountain of truth itself; to extinguish, as a glare from hell, that which for aught he knows may be light from heaven, and everything seem wrapped in hideous uncertainty;—I know but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scathless; it is by holding fast to those things which

are certain still,—the grand, simple landmarks of morality. In the darkest hour through which a human soul can pass, whatever else is doubtful, this at least is certain. If there be no God and no future state, yet, even then, it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward. Blessed beyond all earthly blessedness is the man who, in the tempestuous darkness of the soul, has dared to hold fast to these venerable landmarks. Thrice blessed is he who, when all is drear and cheerless within and without, when his teachers terrify him and his friends shrink from him, has obstinately clung to moral good; thrice blessed, because *his* night shall pass into clear, bright day.

I appeal to the recollection of any man who has passed through that hour of agony, and stood upon the rock at last, the surges stilled below him and the last cloud drifted from the sky above, with a faith, and hope, and trust, no longer traditional, but of his own, a trust which neither earth nor hell shall shake thenceforth forever. But it is not in this way generally that men act who are tempted by doubt. Generally, the step from doubt is a reckless plunge into sensuality. Then comes the darkening of the moral being; and then from uncertainty and skepticism it may be that the path lies unobstructed sheer down into Atheism. But if there be one on earth who deserves compassion, it is the sincere, earnest, and—may I say it without risk of being misunderstood—honest doubter! Let who will denounce him, I will not. I would stand by his side and say, Courage, my brother! You are darkening your own soul; you are contradicting the meaning of your own existence. But God is your Father, and an Infinite Spirit seeks to mingle itself with yours.

ALAS, alas! you do not believe that you have a soul—you do not believe in God—you do not believe that His spirit can find your soul—you believe in the dial and not in the sun—you dare not be alone with Christ—you do not feel the solitary yet humbling grandeur of being in His vast universe alone as He was, with your Father. His life is not the pattern of your life, and His divine humanity is not the inter-

pretation of the mysteries of your solitary being. You cannot walk the valley of the shadow of death fearlessly, as David did, because "Thou art with me."

RELIGIOUS controversy is fast settling into a conflict between two great extreme parties,—those who believe everything, and those who believe nothing; the disciples of credulity and the disciples of skepticism.

THE Atheist is not merely he who professes unbelief, but, strictly speaking, every one who lives without God in the world.

SILENCE.

MEDITATION is done in silence. By it we renounce our narrow individuality, and expatiate into that which is infinite. Only in the sacredness of inward silence does the soul truly meet the secret, hiding God. The strength of resolve, which afterward shapes life and mixes itself with action, is the fruit of those sacred, solitary moments. There is a divine depth in silence. We meet God alone.

SIN.

ORIGINAL sin is an awful fact. It is not the guilt of an ancestor imputed to an innocent descendant, but it is the tendencies of that ancestor living in his offspring and incurring guilt. Original sin can be forgiven only so far as original sin is removed. It is not Adam's, it is yours; and it must cease to be yours, or else what is "taking away original sin"?

It is an awful thing to see a soul in ruins: like a temple which once was fair and noble, but now lies overthrown, matted with ivy, weeds and tangled briars, among which things loathsome crawl and live. He shall reap the harvest of disappointment,—the harvest of bitter, useless remorse. The crime of sense is avenged by sense, which wears by time. He shall have the worm that gnaws, and the fire that is not quenched. He shall reap the fruit of long indulged desires, which have become tyrannous at last, and constitute him his

own tormenter. His harvest is a soul in flames, and the tongue that no drop can cool; passions that burn, and appetites that crave, when the power of enjoyment is gone. He has sowed to the flesh. "God is not mocked." The man reaps.

HERE, then, is the nature of sin. Sin is not the possession of desires, but the having them in uncontrolled ascendancy over the higher nature. Sinfulness does not consist in having *strong* desires or passions: in the strongest and highest natures, all, including the desires, is strong. Sin is not a real *thing*. It is rather the absence of a something,—the will to do right. It is not a disease or taint—an actual substance— injected into the constitution. It is the absence of the spirit which orders and harmonizes the whole; so that what we mean when we say the natural man must sin inevitably is this, that he has strong natural appetites, and that he has no bias from above to counteract those appetites: exactly as if a ship were deserted by the crew, and left on the bosom of the Atlantic with every sail set and the wind blowing. No one forces her to destruction, yet on the rocks she will surely go, just because there is no pilot at the helm. Such is the state of ordinary men. Temptation leads to fall. The gusts of instincts, which rightly guided would have carried safely into port, dash them on the rocks. No one forces them to sin, but the spirit-pilot has left the helm. [Fallen Nature.]

Sin, therefore, is not in the appetites, but in the absence of a controlling will.

LET us analyze sin. In every act of sin there are two distinct steps: there is the rising of a desire which is natural, and, being natural, is not wrong: there is the indulgence of that desire in forbidden circumstances, and that is sin. Let injury, for example, be inflicted, and resentment will arise. It must arise spontaneously. It is as impossible for injustice to be done, and resentment not to follow, as it is for the flesh not to quiver on the application of intense torture. Resentment is but the sense of injustice made more vivid by its being brought home to ourselves: resentment is beyond our control, so far. There is

no sin in this: but let resentment rest there,—let it pass into, not justice, but revenge,—let it smoulder in vindictive feeling till it becomes retaliation,—and then a natural feeling has grown into a transgression.

AND oh, the untold world of agony contained in that expression “a lost soul”!—agony exactly in proportion to the nobleness of original powers. For it is a strange and mournful truth, that the qualities which enable men to shine are exactly those which minister to the worst ruin. God's highest gifts—talent, beauty, feeling, imagination, power,—they carry with them the possibility of the highest heaven and the lowest hell. Be sure that it is by that which is highest in you that you may be lost. It is the awful warning, and not the excuse of evil, that the light which leads astray is light from heaven. The shallow fishing-boat glides safely over the reefs where the noble bark strands: it is the very might and majesty of her career that bury the sharp rock deeper in her bosom.

THE motive on which a deed of sin is done is not the motive which a man allows to others or whispers to himself. Listen to the criminal receiving sentence, and the cause of condemnation is not the enormity of the crime, but the injustice of the country's law. Hear the man of disorderly life, whom society has expelled from her bosom, and the cause of the expulsion is not his profligacy, but the false slander which has misrepresented him. Take his own account of the matter, and he is innocent, injured, pure. For there are names so tender, and so full of fond endearment, with which this world sugars over its dark guilt toward God with a crust of superficial whiteness, that the sin on which eighteen centuries have looked back appalled was, to the doers of that sin, nothing atrocious, but respectable, defensible, nay, even, under the circumstances, necessary.

God does not predestinate men to fail. That is strikingly told in the history of Judas—“From a ministry and apostleship Judas fell, that he might go to his own place.” The ministry and apostleship were that to which God had

destined him. To work out that was the destiny appointed to him, as truly as to any of the other apostles. He was called, elected to that. But when he refused to execute that mission, the very circumstances which, by God's decree, were leading him to blessedness, hurried him to ruin. Circumstances prepared by Eternal Love became the destiny which conducted him to everlasting doom. He was a predestined man—crushed by his fate. But he went to his "*own place*." He had shaped his own destiny. So the ship is wrecked by the winds and waves—hurried to its fate. But the winds and waves were in truth its best friends. Rightly guided, it would have made use of them to reach the port; wrongly steered, they became the destiny which drove it on the rocks. Failure, the wreck of life, is not to be impiously traced to the Will of God. God will have all men to be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth. God willeth not the death of a sinner.

HE was the victim of sin—He died by sin. It is the appalling mystery of our redemption that the Redeemer took the attitude of subjection to evil. There was scarcely a form of evil with which Christ did not come in contact, and by which He did not suffer. He was the victim of false friendship and ingratitude, the victim of bad government and injustice. He fell a sacrifice to the vices of all classes, to the selfishness of the rich and the fickleness of the poor: intolerance, formalism, skepticism, hatred of goodness, were the foes which crushed Him.

THE extent to which sin hardens depends partly on the estimate taken of it by society. The falsehood of Abraham, the guilt and violence of David, were very different in their effect on character in an age when truth and purity and gentleness were scarcely recognized, from what they would be now. Then Abraham and David had not so sinned against their consciences as a man would sin now in doing the same acts, because their consciences were less enlightened.

THIS is the worst burden that comes from transgression: loss of faith in human goodness; the being sentenced to go through life haunted with a presence from which we cannot

escape; the presence of evil in the hearts of all that we approach.

THE consequences of sin are meant to wean from sin. The penalty annexed to it is, in the first instance, corrective, not penal. Fire burns the child, to teach it one of the truths of this universe—the property of fire to burn. The first time it cuts its hand with a sharp knife, it has gained a lesson which it never will forget. Now, in the case of pain, this experience is seldom, if ever, in vain. There is little chance of a child forgetting that fire will burn, and that sharp steel will cut; but the moral lessons contained in the penalties annexed to wrong-doing are just as truly intended, though they are by no means so unerring in enforcing their application. The fever in the veins and the headache which succeed intoxication are meant to warn against excess. On the first occasion they are simply corrective; in every succeeding one they assume more and more a penal character in proportion as the conscience carries with them the sense of ill desert.

Sorrow, then, has done its work when it deters from evil; in other words, when it works repentance. In the sorrow of the world the obliquity of the heart toward evil is not cured; it seems as if nothing cured it; heartache and trials come in vain; the history of life at last is what it was at first. The man is found erring where he erred before,—the same course, begun with the certainty of the same desperate end, which has taken place so often before.

THE hardening effects of sin, which save from pain, are worse judgments than the sharpest suffering. Anguish is, I am more and more sure, corrective; hardness has in it no hope. Which would you choose if you were compelled to make a choice?—the torture of a dividing limb granulating again, and by the very torture giving indications of life, or the painlessness of mortification? the worse throb from the surgeon's knife, or ossification of the heart? In the spiritual world, the pangs of the most exquisite sensitiveness cut to the quick by the sense of fault and aching almost hopelessly, but leaving conscience still alive, and aspiration still uncrushed, or the death of every remnant of what is good,

the ossification of the soul, the painless extinction of the moral being, its very self? This is my reply to myself. The whole mystery of pain has been unraveling itself to my heart gradually, and now that I have got a clue, the worse than Cretan labyrinth turns out to be harmonious and beautiful arrangement, so that the paths which are still unexplored I can now believe a part of the same plan. Pain has long ceased to be an unintelligible mystery to me. Agony and anguish,—oh, in these, far more than in sunshine, I can read a meaning and believe in infinite love!

LEARN the individual character of sin — its personal origin, and personal identity. There can be no transference of it. It is individual and incommunicable. My sin cannot be your sin, nor yours mine.

THERE are persons who go through life sinning and sorrowing, sorrowing and sinning. No experience teaches them. Torrents of tears flow from their eyes. They are full of eloquent regrets. You cannot find it in your heart to condemn them, for their sorrow is so graceful and touching, so full of penitence and self-condemnation. But tears, heart-breaks, repentance, warnings, are all in vain. Where they did wrong once, they do wrong again. What are such persons to do in the next life? Where will the Elis of this world be? God only knows. But Christ has said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."

EVIL in a thousand forms surrounds us. We are the victims of physical and moral evil, and till this is put down forever the completeness of the individual cannot be; for we are bound up with the universe. Talk of the perfect happiness of any unit man while the race still mourns! Why, the evils of the race fall on him every day. Talk of the perfect bliss of any spirit while the spiritual kingdom is incomplete! No, the golden close is yet to come, and the blessing of the individual parts can only be with the blessing of the whole. And so the apostle speaks of the whole creation groaning and travailling in pain together until now, "waiting for the adoption, to-wit, the redemption of our body."

THERE are those who lead the life of the ephemeron, in whom there is nothing immortal, spending their days like the beasts that perish,—nay, less fitted for eternity than they. No deep thoughts, no acts fought out on deep abiding principles, have been theirs. They live mere accidental beings, light mortals who dance their giddy round above the abysses, looking at the things seen with transient tears for sorrow and transient smiles for joy. This life is their all; and at last they have fluttered out their time, and go forth into endless night. Why not?—what is there in them that is not even now perishing?

YOUR foe in this world is vice, the devil-nature in you and in me; it is in ourselves that our foe is; conquer *that*, spend half the energy in trampling *that* down which is spent in religious controversy with Christians, and the kingdom of God will soon be established in this world.

IT is to be observed there is a difference between sin and transgression. Every sin is a transgression of the law, but every transgression of the law is not necessarily a sin. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law. Now mark the difference. It is possible for a man to transgress the law of God, not knowingly, and then in inspired language we are told that “sin is not imputed unto him.” Yet for all that, the penalty will follow whenever a man transgresses, but the chastisement which belongs to sin, to known willful transgression, will not follow.

THERE are moments when we can soar above the world; when, by God's Spirit, we deem nothing too high, too brave, too true, to which we may not aspire; when we could go through this world, with our staff in our hands, asking only to be permitted to believe, to suffer, and to love. And there are other times, when we are forced to feel that there is no meanness of which we are not capable; when we are so startled at ourselves that we are ready to cry, “Can I be such a villain? Is there no difference between me, and one exposed to public infamy on the hulks or on the scaffold, save that he was tempted, and I was not?” I know that I am speaking the experience of many a man in this congre-

gation, when I say that he has known something of these diviner feelings, and something of this feeling of inward degradation.

THE heart—the heart—there is the evil! The imagination, which was given to spiritualize the senses, is often turned into a means of sensualizing the spirit. Beware of reverie, and indulgence in forbidden images, unless you would introduce into your bosom a serpent, which will creep, and crawl, and leave the venom of its windings in your heart.

THERE was no germ of sin in Christ; for sin is the acting of an evil will. Sin resides in the will, not in the natural appetites. There was no germ of sin in Him; but there were germs of feeling, natural and innocent, which show that He was in all points tempted like as we are.

SIN is detestable, horrible, in God's sight, and when once it has been made clear that it is not lawful, a Christian has nothing to do with toleration of it.

PAST sin may be made a stepping-stone to heaven.

THERE are two classes of sins. There are some sins by which man crushes, wounds, malevolently injures his brother man: those sins which speak of a bad, tyrannical and selfish heart. Christ met those with denunciation. There are other sins by which a man injures himself. There is a life of reckless indulgence; there is a career of yielding to ungovernable propensities, which most surely conducts to wretchedness and ruin, but makes a man an object of compassion rather than of condemnation.

GOD sees sin not in its consequences but in itself,—a thing infinitely evil, even if the consequences were happiness to the guilty instead of misery.

SINCERITY.

It is beautiful to see men sincere without being haunted with the consciousness of their sincerity. There is a sickly

habit that men get of looking into themselves and thinking how they are appearing. We are always unnatural when we do that. The very tread of one who is thinking how he appears to others becomes dizzy with affectation. He is too conscious of what he is doing, and self-consciousness is affectation. Let us aim at being natural, and we can only become natural by thinking of God and duty, instead of the way in which we are serving God and duty.

THE thing we want in Christianity is not politeness, it is sincerity.

SLANDER.

It is not even necessary that a word should be distinctly uttered; a dropped lip and arched eyebrow, a shrugged shoulder, a significant look, an incredulous expression of countenance, nay, even an emphatic silence, may do the work; and when the light and trifling thing which has done the mischief has fluttered off, the venom is left behind to work and rankle, to inflame hearts, to fever human existence, and to poison human society at the fountain-springs of life. Very emphatically was it said by one whose whole being had smarted under such affliction, "Adder's poison is under their lips."

NEITHER can you stop the consequences of a slander. You may publicly prove its falsehood, you may sift every atom, explain and annihilate it; and yet, years after you had thought that all had been disposed of forever, the mention of a name wakes up associations in the mind of some one who heard the calumny, but never heard or never attended to the refutation, or who has only a vague and confused recollection of the whole.

THE first introduction of a demon spirit is found connected with a slanderous insinuation against the Almighty, implying that His command had been given in envy of His creature: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Love is the only remedy for slander. No set of rules or restrictions can stop it. We may denounce, but we shall denounce in vain.

No innocence will shield, no honor, nor integrity bright as the sun itself, will keep off altogether the biting breath of calumny.

I HUMBLY console myself with remembering that One, before whom my spirit bows with adoration profounder in proportion as I understand Him and His infinite mind, was in His day reckoned an infidel and a latitudinarian worldling by the religious, and an anarchist whom it was fatal to the respectability of Cæsar's friend to even defend. Oh, for his sublime, brave, Divine truthfulness!

SOCIETY.

THERE is a growing tendency to look on a life of contemplation and retirement, of separation from all earthly ties—in a word, asceticism—as the higher life. Let us understand that God has so made man, that ordinarily he who lives alone leaves part of his *heart* uncultivated, for God made man for domestic life. He who would be wiser than his Maker is only wise in appearance. He who cultivates one part of his nature at the expense of the rest has not produced a perfect man, but an exaggeration. It is easy, in silence and solitude, for the hermit to be abstracted from all human interests and hopes, to be dead to honor, dead to pleasure. But, then, the sympathies which make him a man with men—how shall they grow? He is not the highest Christian who lives alone and single, but he who, whether single or married, lives superior to this earth; he who, in the midst of domestic cares, petty annoyances, or daily vexations, can still be calm, and serene, and sweet. That is real unworldliness; and, in comparison with this, the mere hermit's life is easy indeed.

THE spirit of religious exclusiveness, which looks down contemptuously instead of tenderly on worldly men, and

banishes a man forever from the circle of its joys because he has sinned notoriously, is a bad spirit.

Lastly, the reason given for this dealing is, "Son, thou art always with me, and all that I have is thine." By which Christ seems to tell us that the disproportion between man and man is much less than we suppose. The profligate had had one hour of ecstasy,—the other had had a whole life of ecstasy.

WE value a gift in proportion to its rarity, its distinctive character, separating its possessor from the rest of his fellow-men; whereas, in truth, those gifts which leave us in lonely majesty apart from our species, useless to them, benefiting ourselves alone, are not the most Godlike, but the least so; because they are dis severed from that beneficent charity which is the very being of God. Your lofty incommunicable thoughts, your ecstasies, and aspirations, and contemplative raptures,—in virtue of which you have estimated yourself as the porcelain of the earth, of another nature altogether than the clay of common spirits—tried by the test of charity,—what is there grand in these if they cannot be applied as blessings to those that are beneath you? One of our countrymen has achieved for himself extraordinary scientific renown; he pierced the mysteries of nature, he analyzed her processes, he gave new elements to the world. The same man applied his rare intellect to the construction of a simple and very common instrument—that well-known lamp which has been the guardian of the miner's life from the explosion of fire. His discoveries are his nobility in this world; his trifling invention gives him rank in the world to come. By the former he shines as one of the brightest luminaries in the firmament of science; by the latter, evincing a spirit animated and directed by Christian love, he takes his place as one of the Church of God.

Now the first public act of our Redeemer's life is to go with His disciples to a marriage. He consecrates marriage, and the sympathies which lead to marriage. He declares the sacredness of feelings which had been reckoned carnal, and low, and human. He stamped His image on human joys, human connections, human relationships. He pro-

nounces that they are more than human—as it were sacramental: the means whereby God's presence comes to us; the types and shadows whereby higher and deeper relationships become possible to us. For it is through our human affections that the soul first learns to feel that its destiny is divine; it is through a mortal yearning, unsatisfied, that the spirit ascends, seeking a higher object; it is through the gush of our human tenderness that the immortal and the infinite in us reveals itself. Never does a man know the force that is in him till some mighty affection or grief has humanized the soul. It is by an earthly relationship that God has typified to us and helped us to conceive the only true espousal,—the marriage of the soul to her eternal Lord.

AGAIN, it was His glory to declare the sacredness of all natural enjoyments.

It was not a marriage only, but a marriage-*feast*, to which Christ conducted His disciples. Now we cannot get over this plain fact by saying that it was a religious ceremony: that would be mere sophistry. It was an indulgence in the festivity of life; as plainly as words can describe, here was a banquet of human enjoyment. The very language of the master of the feast about men who had well drunk tells us that there had been, not excess, of course, but happiness there and merry-making.

Neither can we explain away the lesson by saying that it is no example to us, for Christ was there to do good, and that what was safe for Him might be unsafe for us. For if His life is no pattern for us here in this case of accepting an invitation, in what can we be sure it is a pattern? Besides, He took His disciples there, and His mother was there: they were not shielded as he was, by immaculate purity. He was there as a guest at first, as Messiah only afterward: thereby He declared the sacredness of natural enjoyments.

Here again, then, Christ manifested His peculiar glory. The Temptation of the Wilderness was past; the baptism of John and the life of abstinence to which it introduced were over; and now the Bridegroom comes before the world in the true glory of Messiah,—not in the life of asceticism, but in the life of godliness; not separating from life, but

consecrating it, carrying a divine spirit into every simplest act,—accepting an invitation to a feast, giving to water the virtue of a nobler beverage. For Christianity does not destroy what is natural, but ennobles it. To turn water into wine, and what is common into what is holy, is indeed the glory of Christianity.

It should be specially observed here, that *that* life which has been given to us as a specimen of life for all, was a social, a human life. Christ did not refuse to mix with the common joys and common sorrows of humanity. He was present at the marriage-feast, and by the bier of the widow's son. This, of the two lives, was the one which, because it was the most human, was the most divine: the most rare, the most difficult, the most natural,—therefore the most Christ-like.

AND such are the really fatal men in the work of life,—those who look out on human life from a cloister, or who know nothing of men except through books. Religious persons dread worldliness. They will not mix in politics; they keep aloof from life. Doubtless there is a danger in knowing too much of the world; but, beyond all comparison, of the two extremes the worst is knowing too little of life. A priesthood severed from human sympathies, separated from men, cut off from human affections, and then meddling fatally with questions of human life,—that is the Romish priesthood.

SOLITUDE.

It is a fearful, solitary feeling, that lonely truth of life; yet not without a certain strength and grandeur in it. The life that is the deepest and the truest will feel most vividly both its desolation and its majesty. We live and die alone. God and our own souls,—we fall back upon them at last. "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."

It is a solemn thing, doubtless, to be apart from men, and to feel eternity rushing by like an arrowy river. But

the solitude of Christ was the solitude of a crowd. In that single Human bosom dwelt the Thought which was to be the germ of the world's life,—a thought unshared, misunderstood, or rejected. Can you not feel the grandeur of those words, when the Man, reposing on His solitary strength, felt the last shadow of perfect isolation pass across His soul: "My God, my God, why hast *Thou* forsaken me?"

THERE are two kinds of solitude, the first consisting of insulation in space, the other of isolation of the spirit. The first is simply separation by distance. When we are seen, touched, heard by none, we are said to be alone. And all hearts respond to the truth of that saying, This is not solitude; for sympathy can people our solitude with a crowd. The fisherman on the ocean alone at night is not alone when he remembers the earnest longings which are arising up to heaven at home for his safety. The traveler is not alone when the faces which will greet him on his arrival seem to beam upon him as he trudges on. The solitary student is not alone when he feels that human hearts will respond to the truths which he is preparing to address to them.

The other is loneliness of soul. There are times when hands touch ours, but only send an icy chill of unsympathizing indifference to the heart; when eyes gaze into ours, but with a glazed look which cannot read into the bottom of our souls; when words pass from our lips, but only come back as an echo reverberated without reply through a dreary solitude; when the multitude throng and press us, and we cannot say, as Christ said, "Somebody hath *touched* me:" for the contact has been not between soul and soul, but only between form and form.

THE Redeemer's soul was alone in dying. The hour had come, they were all gone, and He was, as He predicted, left alone. All that is human drops from us in that hour. Human faces flit and fade, and the sounds of the world become confused. "I shall die alone"—yes, and alone you live. The philosopher tells us that no atom in creation touches another atom—they only approach within a certain distance; then the attraction ceases, and an invisible some-

thing repels,—they only *seem* to touch. No soul touches another soul except at one or two points, and those chiefly external,—a fearful and a lonely thought.

SORROW.

It is not hardships that are the wearing work of life. It is anxiety of heart and mind; it is the fretting, carking cares of deep solicitude. One sorrow, one deep, corroding anxiety, will wear deeper furrows in a cheek and brow than ten campaigns can do. One day's suspense will exhaust more, and leave the cheek paler, than a week's fasting.

THE deep undertone of this world is sadness,—a solemn bass occurring at measured intervals, and heard through all other tones. Ultimately all the strains of this world's music resolve themselves into that tone; and I believe that, rightly felt, the Cross, and the Cross alone, interprets the mournful mystery of life—the sorrow of the Highest, the Lord of life; the result of error and sin, but ultimately remedial, purifying, and exalting.

THERE is an anxiety about loss, about the consequences of misdoing, about a ruined reputation, about a narrowed sphere of action. Now sin brings all these things; but to sorrow for them is not to sorrow before God. To sorrow for such things is only a worldly grief, because it is only about worldly things. Observe, therefore, that pain, simply as pain, does no good; that sorrow, merely as sorrow, has in it no magical efficacy. Shame may harden into effrontery, punishment may rouse into defiance. Again, pain, self-inflicted, does no good. It is a great error when men, perceiving that God's natural penalties and hardships strengthen and purify the spirit, think to attain to a similar good by forcing such penalties and hardships upon themselves.

THIS is the blessedness of the suffering of Christ; it is the law of the Cross; it is the vicarious principle pervading life, that, voluntarily or involuntarily, we must suffer for others. If others are benefited involuntarily by our sufferings, then we do no more than the beasts who fulfill the

law of their being unconsciously; who yield up their lives unwillingly, and therefore are not blessed by it. But if we are willing to bear our woe because we know that good will accrue, we know not how, or why, or when, to others, then we have indeed become partakers of Christ's Spirit, and learned a godlike lesson. To be willing to bear in order to teach others!—to lose, in order that others may "through us noblier live"—that is to know something of the blessedness He knew.

THE apostle rejoiced, not that the Corinthians sorrowed, but that they sorrowed unto repentance. Sorrow has two results: it may end in spiritual life, or in spiritual death; and in themselves one of these is as natural as the other. Sorrow may produce two kinds of reformation—a transient or a permanent one,—an alteration in habits, which, originating in emotion, will last so long as that emotion continues, and then after a few fruitless efforts be given up,—a repentance which will be repented of; or again, a permanent change, which will be reversed by no afterthought,—a repentance not to be repented of. Sorrow is in itself, therefore, a thing neither good nor bad; its value depends on the spirit of the person on whom it falls. Fire will inflame straw, soften iron, or harden clay; its effects are determined by the object with which it comes in contact. Warmth develops the energies of life, or helps the progress of decay. It is a great power in the hothouse, a great power also in the coffin. It expands the leaf, matures the fruit, adds precocious vigor to vegetable life. And warmth, too, develops with tenfold rapidity the weltering process of dissolution. So, too, with sorrow. There are spirits in which it develops the seminal principle of life; there are others in which it prematurely hastens the consummation of irreparable decay.

NAY, more: the religion which is only sunned into being by happiness is a suspicious thing. Having been warmed by joy, it will become cold when joy is over; and then when these blessings are removed we count ourselves hardly treated, as if we had been defrauded of a right; rebellious,

hard feelings come; then it is you see people become bitter, spiteful, discontented. At every step in the solemn path of life something must be mourned which will come back no more; the temper that was so smooth becomes rugged and uneven; the benevolence that expanded upon all narrows into an ever-dwindling selfishness. We are alone.

THE loss of those dear to us—relations and friends—when it is borne as coming from God, has the effect of strengthening and purifying the character. But to bring sorrow willfully upon ourselves can be of no avail toward improvement. The difference between these two things lies in this, that when God inflicts the blow He gives the strength; but when you give it to yourself God does not promise aid. Be sure this world has enough of the Cross in it: you need not go out of your way to seek it. Be sure there will always be enough of humiliation, and shame, and solitariness for each man to bear if he be living the Christ-life.

As the tree is fertilized by its own broken branches and fallen leaves, and grows out by its own decay, so is the soul of man ripened out of broken hopes and blighted affections. The law of our humanity is the common law of the universe,—life out of death, beauty out of decay. Not till those fierce young passions, over the decay of which the old man grieves, have been stilled into silence; not until the eye has lost its fire, and the cheek its hot flush, can “the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us”—the beauty of a spirit subdued, chastened, and purified by loss.

TRUE it is that there are pentecostal hours when the soul is surrounded by a kind of glory, and we are tempted to make tabernacles upon the mount, as if life were meant for rest; but out of that very cloud there comes a voice telling of the cross, and bidding us descend into the common world again, to simple duties and humble life. This very principle seems to be contained in the text. The apostle's remedy for this artificial feeling is—“Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”

NOTE here the difference between Adam and Christ. Adam's was a state of satisfied happiness, Christ's was one of noble aspiration. His was a Divine sorrow: there was a secret sadness in the heart of the Son of Man. There is a difference between childhood and age, between Christian and unchristian motives. Out of contemplations such as these we collect a presumption of immortality.

TRUE sorrow — sorrow to God — softens, not hardens, the soul. It opens sympathies, for it teaches what others suffer; it gives a deeper power of sympathy and consolation, for only through suffering can you win the Godlike ability of feeling for others' pain; it expands affection, for your sorrow makes you accordant with the "still, sad music" of humanity. A true sorrow is that "deep grief which humanizes the soul."

CHRISTIAN men, when sorrow comes speculation will not do. It is like casting the lead from mere curiosity when you have a sound, strong ship in deep water. But when she is grinding on the rocks,—oh, we sound for God when the soul is on the rocks! For God becomes a living God, a reality, a home, when once we feel that we are helpless and homeless in this world without Him.

THE susceptibility of emotion varies with individuals. Some men feel intensely, others suffer less keenly; but this is constitutional, belonging to nervous temperament rather than to moral character. *This* is the characteristic of the Divine sorrow, that it is a repentance "not repented of"; no transient, short-lived resolutions, but sustained resolve.

THE right hand and left of Christ in His kingdom are given only to those who drink of His cup and are baptized with His baptism.

INATTENTIVENESS of spirit, produced by want of spiritual interest, is the first cause of disappointment.

SUPERSTITION.

SUPERSTITION is the refuge of a skeptical spirit, which has a heart too devout to dare to be skeptical. Men tremble at new theories, new views, the spread of infidelity, and they think to fortify themselves against these by multiplying the sanctities which they reverence. But all this will not do. Superstition cannot do the work of faith and give repose or peace. It is not by multiplying ceremonies; it is not by speaking of holy things with low, bated breath; it is not by entrenching the soul behind the infallibility of a church, or the infallibility of the words and sentences of a book; it is not by shutting out inquiry, and resenting every investigation as profane, that you can arrest the progress of infidelity. Faith, not superstition, is the remedy.

THERE is a time in the history of every superstition when it is respectable, even deserving reverence, when men believed it; when it is in fact associated with the highest feelings that are in man, and the channel even for God's manifestation to the soul. And there is a time when it becomes less and less credible, when clearer science is superseding its pretensions.

SUSCEPTIBILITY.

THERE is deep knowledge of human nature and exquisite fidelity to truth in the single touch by which the impression of religion on them is described. The seed sprang up quickly, and then withered away as quickly, because it had no depth of root. There is a quick, easily-moved susceptibility that rapidly exhibits the slightest breath of those emotions which play upon the surface of the soul, and then as rapidly passes off. In such persons words are ever at command—voluble and impassioned words. Tears flow readily. The expressive features exhibit every passing shade of thought. Every thought and every feeling plays upon the surface; everything that is sown springs up at once with vehement vegetation. But slightness and inconstancy go together with violence. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." True; but also out of the

emptiness of the heart the mouth can speak even more volubly. He who can always find the word which is appropriate and adequate to his emotions is not the man whose emotions are deepest: warmth of feeling is one thing, permanence is another. On Tuesday last, they who went to the table most moved and touched were not necessarily those who raised in a wise observer's breast the strongest hope of persistence in the life of Christ. Rather those who were calm and subdued: that which springs up quickly often does so merely from this, that it has no depth of earth to give it room to strike its roots down and deep.

God gives visions at His own will, and according to certain and fixed laws. He does not inspire every one; He does not reveal His mysteries to men of selfish, or hard, or phlegmatic temperaments. He gives preternatural communications to those whom He prepares beforehand by a peculiar spiritual sensitiveness. There are, physically, certain sensitivenesses to sound and color that qualify men to become gifted musicians and painters; so, spiritually, there are certain strong original susceptibilities (I say *original* as derived from God, the origin of all), and on these God bestows strange gifts and sights, deep feelings not to be uttered in human language, and immeasurable by the ordinary standard.

SYMPATHY.

THINK you He cannot sympathize with our worst sorrows who shielded from scorn the broken-hearted who could only smite upon his breast; who stood like a God between their victim and the hell-hounds who were baying for their prey, till they cowered at His feet and slunk away; who could forgive a coward, and select the alien and heretic as a type of the neighbor who is to be loved; who was peculiarly sensitive to the charm of woman's society and its soothing gentleness; who wept for temporary grief; who was considerate for the tired disciples and the hungry multitude; whose chosen home was the house of the publican and sinner; who bore contempt with majestic dignity—is that a trifle?—who felt keenly, as His own touching words witness, the pain of

homelessness? Oh, can you say that He could not enter into our worst sorrows, or that His trials were in "show"! Comprehend that heart, containing all that was manliest and all that was most womanly. Think what you will, but do not mistake Him, or else you will lose the one great certainty to which, in the midst of the darkest doubt, I never ceased to cling—the entire symmetry and loveliness and the unequaled nobleness of the humanity of the Son of Man. Ask me any question you will on this, for if there has been a subject I have pondered over and believed in, it is the mind and heart of Jesus. Do not go to that absurd nonsense of mysterious suffering that cannot be comprehended,—something neither of earth nor heaven, neither the affection of the man nor the God,—a mystery, and so forth, of which the Bible says nothing. Mysterious enough they were, as the sufferings of the deepest hearts ever must be, but mysterious only in this sense. Alas! they are intelligible enough to any one who has ever conceived sublime mission with a warm heart, and felt courage and tenderness fail in the idea of executing it; intelligible enough for any one who knows what it is to be wrung to the heart by the sorrows and faults of others. All that is unintelligible is the *degree* of agony. To understand that, we must first be like Him,—as noble, and as loving, and as spotless.

READ the Sermon on the Mount. It tells of a purity as of snow resting on an Alpine pinnacle, white in the blue holiness of heaven; and yet also, He, the All-pure, had tenderness for what was not pure. He who stood in Divine uprightness that never faltered, felt compassion for the ruined, and infinite gentleness for human fall. Broken, disappointed, doubting hearts, in dismay and bewilderment, never looked in vain to Him. Very strange, if we stop to think of it, instead of repeating it as a matter of course. For generally human goodness repels from it evil men: they shun the society and presence of men reputed good, as owls fly from light. But here was purity *attracting* evil; that was the wonder. Harlots and wretches steeped in infamy gathered around Him. No wonder the purblind Pharisees thought there must be something in Him like such sinners which drew them so. Like draws to like: if He chose their

society before that of the Pharisee, was it not because of some congeniality in evil? But they *did* crowd His steps, and that because they saw a hope opened out in a hopeless world for fallen spirits and broken hearts,—ay, and seared hearts. The Son of Man was forever standing among the lost, and His ever predominant feelings were sadness for the evil in human nature, hope for the Divine good in it, and the Divine image never worn out wholly.

I do feel that sympathy from man, in sorrow such as yours, is almost mockery. None can feel it, and certainly none can soothe it, except the Man Christ Jesus, whose infinite bosom echoes back every throb of yours. To my own heart, that marvelous fact of God enduing Himself with a human soul of sympathy is the most precious, and the one I least could afford to part with of all the invigorating doctrines which everlasting truth contains. That Christ feels *now* what we feel—our risen, ascended Lord—and that He can impart to us, in our fearful wrestlings, all the blessedness of His sympathy, is a truth which, to my soul, stands almost without a second. I do pray that, in all its fullness, this may be yours—a truth to rest and live upon.

CHRISTIANITY does not sear the human heart; it softens it. They who forbid grief should, to be consistent, go further and forbid affection, for grief is only a state of the affections. If joy be felt in the presence of the loved object, grief must be felt in its absence. Christianity destroys selfishness, makes a man quick and sensitive for others, and alive to every call of affection. Moreover, dealing with infinite things, it imparts something of its own infinitude to every feeling. A Christian is a man whose heart is exquisitely attuned to all utterances of grief. Shall *he* not feel or mourn? His Master wept over the grave of friendship. Tears of patriotism fell from His eyes. There is no unmanliness in shedding tears; it is not unchristian to yield to deep feeling. We may admire the stern old Roman heart, but we must not forget that the Roman stoicism is not of the spirit of Christianity, for Christianity says “Weep.”

THE great thing which Christ did was to call men back to simplicity and nature,—not to perverted, but original nature. He counted it no derogation of His manhood to be seen to weep; He thought it no shame to mingle with merry crowds; He opened His heart wide to all the genial and all the mournful impressions of this manifold life of ours. And this is what we have to do, be natural. Let God,—that is, let the influences of God,—freely play unthwarted upon the soul. Let there be no unnatural repression, no control of feeling, by mere effort. Let there be no artificial and prolonged grief, no “minstrels making a noise.” Let great Nature have her way; or, rather, feel that you are in a Father’s world, and live in it with Him, frankly, in a free, fearless, childlike, and natural spirit. Then grief will do its work healthily. The heart will bleed, and stanch when it has bled enough. Do not stop the bleeding; but, also, do not open the wound afresh.

THE Divine part was done in sympathy. By sympathy we commonly mean little more than condolence. If the tear start readily at the voice of grief, and the purse-strings open at the accents of distress, we talk of a man’s having great sympathy. To weep with those who weep:—common sympathy does not mean much more.

It is in this entire and perfect sympathy with all humanity that the heart of Jesus differs from every other heart that is found among the sons of men. And it is this, oh, it is this, which is the chief blessedness of having such a Saviour. If you are poor you can only get a miserable sympathy from the rich; with the best intentions they cannot understand you. Their sympathy is awkward. If you are in pain, it is only a factitious and constrained sympathy you get from those in health—feelings forced, adopted kindly, but imperfect still. They sit beside you, when the regular condolence is done, conversing on topics with each other that jar upon the ear. *They* sympathize? Miserable comforters are they all. If you are miserable, and tell out your grief, you have the shame of feeling that you were not understood, and that you have bared your inner self to a rude gaze. If you are in doubt, you cannot tell your

doubts to religious people; no, not even to the ministers of Christ,—for they have no place for doubts in their largest system. They ask, What right have you to doubt? They suspect your character. They shake the head, and whisper it about gravely that you read strange books, that you are verging on infidelity. If you are depressed with guilt, to whom shall you tell out your tale of shame? The confessional, with its innumerable evils, and yet indisputably soothing power, is passed away, and there is nothing to supply its place. You cannot speak to your brother man, for you injure him by doing so, or else weaken yourself. You cannot tell it to society, for society judges in the gross, by general rules, and cannot take into account the delicate differences of transgression. It banishes the frail penitent, and does homage to the daring, hard transgressor.

THERE is another class of men who live in sympathy. These are affectionate minds which tremble at the thought of being alone. Not from want of courage nor from weakness of intellect comes their dependence upon others, but from the intensity of their affections. It is the trembling spirit of humanity in them. They want not aid, nor even countenance, but only sympathy. And the trial comes to them not in the shape of fierce struggle, but of chill and utter loneliness, when they are called upon to perform a duty on which the world looks coldly, or to embrace a truth which has not found lodgment yet in the breasts of others.

POWER is shown by God's attention to the vast; sympathy, by His condescension to the small. It is not the thought of heaven's sympathy by which we are impressed when we gaze through the telescope on the mighty world of space, and gain an idea of what is meant by infinite. Majesty and power are there, but the very vastness excludes the thought of sympathy. It is when we look into the world of insignificance, which the microscope reveals, and find that God has gorgeously painted the atoms of creation, and exquisitely furnished forth all that belongs to minutest life, that we feel that God sympathizes and individualizes. When we are told that God is the Redeemer of the *world*, we know that love dwells in the bosom of the Most High; but if we

want to know that God feels for us individually and separately, we must learn by heart this syllable of endearment, "*My Redeemer*." Child of God! if you would have your thought of God something beyond a cold feeling of His presence, let faith *appropriate* Christ. You are as much the object of God's solicitude as if none lived but yourself. He has counted the hairs of your head.

WHEN the electric touch of sympathetic feeling has gone among a mass of men it communicates itself, and is reflected back from every individual in the crowd with a force exactly proportioned to their numbers. The speech or sermon read before the limited circle of a family, and the same discourse uttered before closely crowded hundreds, are two different things. There is strange power even in the mere presence of a common crowd, exciting almost uncontrollable emotion.

WE know what a relief it is to see the honest, affectionate face of a menial servant, or some poor dependent, regretting that your suffering may be infinitely above his comprehension. It may be a secret which you cannot impart to him, or it may be a mental distress which his mind is too uneducated to appreciate; yet still his sympathy in your dark hour is worth a world. What you suffer he knows not, but he knows you do suffer, and it pains him to think of it: there is balm to you in that. This is the power of sympathy.

SYMPATHY is needful in order rightly to understand the higher feelings. There are cold, intellectual men, afraid of enthusiasm, who frown on and forbid every manifestation of feeling. They will talk of the elocution of Isaiah or the logic of St. Paul, and they think to fathom the meaning of Scripture by grammatical criticism; whereas only the Spirit can interpret the Spirit. You must get into the same region of feeling in which prophets breathe, and then only can you understand them.

OBSERVE how he is *touched* by our infirmities — with a separate, special, discriminating love. There is not a single

throb, in a single human bosom, that does not thrill at once with more than electric speed up to the mighty heart of God. *You* have not shed a tear or sighed a sigh that did not come back to you exalted and purified by having passed through the Eternal bosom.

THE deep humanity of the soul of Christ was gifted with those finer sensibilities of affectionate nature which stand in need of sympathy. He not only gave sympathy, but wanted it, too, from others. He who selected the gentle John to be his friend,—who found solace in female sympathy, attended by the women who ministered to him out of their substance,—who in the trial-hour could not bear even to pray without the human presence, which is the pledge and reminder of God's presence,—had nothing in Him of the hard, merely self-dependent character.

HERE, too, we find the Son of Man the pattern of our humanity. His bosom was to mankind what the ocean is to the world: the ocean has its own mighty tide, but it receives and responds to, in exact proportion, the tidal influences of every estuary, and river, and small creek, which pours into its bosom. So it was in Christ: His bosom heaved with the tides of our humanity, but every separate sorrow, pain and joy gave its pulsation.

By Divine sympathy, and by the Divine Image exhibited in the speaking act of Christ, the lost was sought and saved.

TEMPTATION.

It was through temptation that the first Adam fell from a state of nature; it was through temptation, too, that the second Adam redeemed humanity into a state of grace. To the first Adam this world was as a garden is to a child, in which he has nothing to do but to taste and enjoy. Duty came with its infinite demands: it came into collision with the finite appetites, and he fell. The first state is simply that of untempted innocence. In the temptation of the second Adam infinite duty consecrated certain principles of action without reference to the consequences.

BRETHREN, in this world, when there is any foreseen or suspected danger before us, it is our duty to forecast our trial. It is our wisdom to put on our armor—to consider what lies before us—to call up resolution in God's strength to go through what we may have to do. And it is marvelous how difficulties smooth away before a Christian when he does this. Trials that cost him a struggle to meet even in imagination—like the heavy sweat of Gethsemane, when Christ was looking forward and feeling exceeding sorrowful even unto death—come to their crisis; and behold, to his astonishment, they are nothing,—they have been fought and conquered already. But if you go to meet those temptations, not as Christ did, but as the apostles did, prayerless, trusting to the chance impulse of the moment, you may make up your mind to fail. That opportunity lost is irreparable: it is your doom to yield then. Those words are true, you may “sleep on now and take your rest,” for you have betrayed yourselves into the hands of danger.

HE who has never been tried, and he who, having been tempted, has fallen under temptation. The young, unttempted, and upright, are often severe judges. They are for sanguinary punishment; they are for expelling offenders from the bosom of society. The old, on the contrary, who have fallen much, are lenient; but it is a leniency which often talks thus: Men must be men; a young man must sow his wild oats and reform:

EACH man's temptations are made up of a host of peculiarities, internal and external, which no other mind can measure. You are tried alone: alone you pass into the desert—alone you must bear and conquer in the agony—alone you must be sifted by the world. There are moments known only to man's own self, when he sits by the poisoned springs of existence “yearning for a morrow which shall free him from the strife.” And there are trials more terrible than that. Not when vicious inclinations are opposed to holy, but when virtue conflicts with virtue, is the real rending of the soul in twain. A temptation in which the lower nature struggles for mastery can be met by the whole united force of the spirit. But it is when obedience to a

heavenly Father can be only paid by disobedience to an earthly one; or fidelity to duty can be only kept by infidelity to some entangling engagement; or the straight path must be taken over the misery of others; or the counsel of the affectionate friend must be met with a "Get thee behind me, Satan";—oh, it is then, when human advice is unavailable, that the soul feels what it is to be alone.

HE can be touched now, *because* He was tempted then. The incidents and the feelings of that part of the existence which is gone have not passed away without results which are deeply entwined with His present being. His past experience has left certain effects durable in His nature as it is now. It has endued Him with certain qualifications and certain susceptibilities, which He would not have had but for that experience. Just as the results remained upon His body, the prints of the nails in His palms, and the spear-gash in His side, so do the results remain upon His soul, enduing Him with a certain susceptibility, for He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: with certain qualifications, for He is able to show mercy, and to impart grace to help in time of need.

THERE are times when the truest courage is shown in retreating from a temptation. There are times when, not being on a level with other men in qualifications of temper, mind, character, we must compensate by inventions and Christian expedients. You must climb over the crowd of difficulties which stand between your soul and Christ—you must "run before" and forecast trials, and get into the sycamore solitude. Without a living life like this you will never get a glimpse of the King in His beauty: you will never see it. You will be just on the point of seeing Him, and shut out by some unexpected hindrance.

HE who would sympathize must be content to be tried and tempted. There is a hard and boisterous rudeness in our hearts by nature which requires to be softened down. We pass by suffering gayly, carelessly, not in cruelty, but unfeelingly, just because we do not know what suffering is. We wound men by our looks and our abrupt expressions

without intending it, because we have not been taught the delicacy, and the tact, and the gentleness, which can only be learned by the wounding of our own sensibilities. There is a haughty feeling in uprightness, which has never been on the verge of fall, that requires humbling. There is an inability to enter into difficulties of thought which marks the mind to which all things have been presented superficially, and which has never experienced the horror of feeling the ice of doubt crashing beneath the feet.

TIME.

THE thought of Time is solemn and awful to all minds in proportion to their depth, and in proportion as the mind is superficial the thought has appeared little, and has been treated with levity. Brethren, let but a man possess himself of that thought—the deep thought of the brevity of Time; this thought—that time is short, and that eternity is long—and he has learned the first great secret of unworldliness.

TIME is the solemn inheritance to which every man is born heir who has a life-rent of this world—a little section cut out of eternity and given us to do our work in; an eternity before, an eternity behind; and the small stream between, flowing swiftly from one into the vast bosom of the other. The man who has felt with all his soul the significance of Time will not be long in learning any lesson that this world has to teach him. Have you ever felt it, my Christian brethren? Have you ever realized how your own little streamlet is gliding away, and bearing you along with it toward that awful other world of which all things here are but the thin shadows, down into that eternity toward which the confused wreck of all earthly things are bound? Let us realize that, beloved brethren; until that sensation of Time, and the infinite meaning which is wrapped up in it, has taken possession of our souls, there is no chance of our ever feeling other than that it is worse than madness to sleep that time away. Every day in this world has its work; and every day as it rises out of eternity keeps putting to each of us the question afresh, What will you do before

to-day has sunk into eternity and nothingness again. And now what have we to say with respect to this strange, solemn thing — Time? That men do with it through life just what the apostles did for one precious and irreparable hour in the garden of Gethsemane,— they go to sleep. Have you ever seen those marble statues in some public square or garden, which art has so fashioned into a perennial fountain that through the lips or through the hands the clear water flows in a perpetual stream, on and on forever; and the marble stands there, passive, cold, making no effort to arrest the gliding water?

It is so that Time flows through the hands of men — swift, never pausing till it has run itself out; and there is the man petrified into a marble sleep, not feeling what it is which is passing away forever. It is so, brethren, just so, that the destiny of nine men out of ten accomplishes itself, slipping away from them, aimless, useless, till it is too late. And this passage asks us, with all the solemn thoughts which crowd around an approaching eternity, what has been our life, and what do we intend it shall be? Yesterday, last week, last year,— they are gone. Yesterday, for example, was such a day as never was before, and never can be again. Out of darkness and eternity it was born a new, fresh day: into darkness and eternity it sank again forever. It had a voice calling to us of its own: its own work — its own duties. What were we doing yesterday? Idling, whiling away the time in light and luxurious literature — not as life's relaxation, but as life's business? thrilling our hearts with the excitements of life — contriving how to spend the day most pleasantly? Was that our day? Sleep, brethren! all that is but the sleep of the three apostles. And now let us remember this: there is a day coming when that sleep will be broken rudely with a shock: there is a day in our future lives when our time will be counted, not by years nor by months, nor yet by hours, but by minutes,— the day when unmistakable symptoms shall announce that the Messengers of Death have come to take us.

TONGUE.

YOU may tame the wild beast; the conflagration of the American forest will cease when all the timber and the dry underwood is consumed; but you cannot arrest the progress of that cruel word which you uttered carelessly yesterday or this morning—which you will utter, perhaps, before you have passed from this church one hundred yards: that will go on slaying, poisoning, burning beyond your own control, now and forever.

YOU cannot arrest a calumnious tongue; you cannot arrest the calumny itself; you may refute a slanderer, you may trace home a slander to its source, you may expose the author of it, you may by that exposure give a lesson so severe as to make the repetition of the offense appear impossible; but the fatal habit is incorrigible; to-morrow the tongue is at work again.

TRIALS.

EVERY man has his thorn. It is wondrously instructive, as we pass through the crowded town, to see each face, except the very young, careworn, and having lines of suffering; and we are tempted to ask, Where are the happy ones? We may know a man, be intimately acquainted with him, and think his trials cannot be many, his domestic circle is peaceful, his burdens must be light; but do we not now and then catch a sudden start of anguish passing across his brow, the causes of which are known only to God and himself? Well, he too has his thorn, and it is secret.

THE morning rainbow, glittering among the dangerous vapors of the west, predicts that the day will not unclouded pass away. The evening rainbow declares that the storms are past, and that serene weather is setting in. Such is the life of all whom God disciplines. The morning or the evening brightness is the portion of a life, the rest of which is storm.

THE common idea of Love being that which identifies it with a simple wish to confer happiness, no wonder that a feeble attempt is made to vindicate God by a reduction of the apparent amount of pain. Unquestionably, however, love is very different from a desire to shield from pain. Eternal Love gives to painlessness a very subordinate place in comparison of excellence of character. It does not hesitate to secure man's spiritual dignity at the expense of the sacrifice of his well-being. The solution will not do. Let us look the truth in the face,—you cannot hide it from yourself: "Man is born to sorrow, as the sparks fly upward." Sorrow is not an accident, occurring now and then: it is the very woof which is woven into the warp of life. God has created the nerves to agonize, and the heart to bleed; and before a man dies almost every nerve has thrilled with pain, and every affection has been wounded. The account of life which represents it as probation is inadequate: so is that which regards it chiefly as a system of rewards and punishments. The truest account of this mysterious existence seems to be that it is intended for the development of the soul's life, for which sorrow is indispensable. Every son of man who would attain the true end of his being must be baptized with fire. It is the law of our humanity, as that of Christ, that we must be perfected through suffering; and he who has not discerned the Divine Sacredness of Sorrow, and the profound meaning which is concealed in pain, has yet to learn what life is. The Cross, manifested as the Necessity of the Highest Life, alone interprets it.

THE Christian's aim is victory, not freedom from attack; and a soldier cannot learn to fight by pondering over maps and plans of campaigns in his barrack-room. It must be on the field of blood, and in the lonely bivouac. Without real trial, how soon we find rust upon our arms and sloth upon our souls, and the paltry difficulties of common life weigh like chains upon us, instead of being brushed away like cobwebs.

WHEN all is well, when friends abound, and health is strong, and the comforts of life are around us, religion be-

comes faint and shadowy. Religious phraseology passes into cant; the gay, and light, and trifling, use the same words as the holiest; till the earnest man, who *feels* what the world is sentimentalizing about, shuts up his heart, and either coins other phrases or else keeps silence. And then it is that if God would rescue a man from that unreal world of names and mere knowledge, He does what he did with Job, He strips him of His flocks, and his herds, and his wealth; or else, what is the equivalent, of the power of enjoying them,—the desire of his eyes falls from him at a stroke. Things become real then. Trial brings man face to face with God,—God and he touch, and the flimsy veil of bright cloud that hung between him and the sky is blown away: he feels that he is standing outside the earth, with nothing between him and the Eternal Infinite. Oh! there is something in the sick-bed, and the aching heart, and the restlessness and the languor of shattered health, and the sorrow of affections withered, and the stream of life poisoned at its fountain, and the cold, lonely feeling of utter rawness of heart which is felt when God strikes home in earnest, that forces a man to feel what is real and what is not.

WE are not aware of the possession of a heart till some disease, some sudden joy or sorrow, rouses it into extraordinary action. And we are not conscious of the mighty cravings of our half-divine humanity, we are not aware of the God within us, till some chasm yawns which must be filled, or till the rending asunder of our affections forces us to become fearfully conscious of a need.

THERE are others to whom it is all a trial,—a whole world of passions keep up strife within. The name of the spirit which possesses them is Legion. It is a hard fight from the cradle to the grave—up-hill work—toil all the way; and at the last it seems as if they had only just kept their ground.

It is a painful thing, that weeding work. "Every branch in me that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The keen edge of God's pruning-knife

cuts sheer through. No weak tenderness stops Him whose love seeks Goodness, not Comfort, for His servants. A man's distractions are in his wealth — and perhaps fire or failure make him bankrupt: what he feels is God's sharp knife. Pleasure has dissipated his heart, and a stricken frame forbids his enjoying pleasure: shattered nerves and broken health wear out the life of Life. Or perhaps it comes in a sharper, sadder form: the shaft of death goes home — there is heard the wail of danger in his household. And then, when sickness has passed on to hopelessness, and hopelessness has passed on to death, the crushed man goes into the chamber of the dead; and there, when he shuts down the lid upon the coffin of his wife, or the coffin of his child, his heart begins to tell him the meaning of all this. Thorns had been growing in his heart, and the sharp knife has been at work making room, — but by an awful desolation, — tearing up and cutting down, that the Life of God in the soul may not be choked.

MISERY is a trial, but it makes this world undesirable; and persecution estranges a man from resting on earthly friends, and forces him to choose One whom he would never have chosen if any other had offered; but prosperity makes earth a home, and popularity exalts self and invites compliance to the world. It is the old story of one winter in Capua effecting a ruin for Hannibal, which neither the snow of the Alps nor the sun of Italy, the treachery of the Gauls nor the prowess of the Romans, could achieve.

HIS ways are indeed wonderful, — *how* wonderful eternity alone can show, where we shall see the connection of what we are pleased to call trivial events, with His most stupendous schemes, and all that is dark and difficult and melancholy in this unintelligible world, — all that gives our presumptuous reasoning hard thoughts of God, all that has grieved and disappointed and misanthropized, — will be fully explained and merged in one unclouded blaze of glory. The time may be much nearer than we expect.

EVERY ache and pain, every wrinkle you see stamping itself on a parent's brow, every accident which reveals the

uncertain tenure of life and possessions, every funeral-bell that tolls, are only God's reminders that we are tenants at will and not by right — pensioners on the bounty of an hour.

TRINITY.

THERE are those who incline to sneer at the Trinitarian; those to whom the doctrine appears merely a contradiction, a puzzle, an entangled, labyrinthine enigma, in which there is no meaning whatever. But let all such remember that though the doctrine may appear to them absurd, because they have not the proper conception of it, some of the profoundest thinkers, and some of the holiest spirits among mankind, have believed in this doctrine — have clung to it as a matter of life or death. Let them be assured of this, that whether the doctrine be true or false, it is not necessarily a doctrine self-contradictory. Let them be assured of this, in all modesty, that such men never could have held it unless there was latent in the doctrine a deep truth, perchance the truth of God.

WE will take any material substance: we find in that substance qualities; we will say three qualities — color, shape, and size. Color is not shape, shape is not size, size is not color. There are three distinct essences, three distinct qualities, and yet they all form one unity, one single conception, one idea — the idea, for example, of a tree.

Now we will ascend from that into the immaterial world; and here we come to something more distinct still. Hitherto we have had but three qualities; we now come to the mind of man, — where we find something more than qualities. We will take three — the will, the affections, and the thoughts of man. His will is not his affections, neither are his affections his thoughts; and it would be imperfect and incomplete to say that these are mere qualities in the man. They are separate consciousnesses, living consciousnesses, as distinct and as really sundered as it is possible for three things to be, yet bound together by one unity of consciousness. Now we have distinct proof than even this that these things are three. The anatomist can tell you that the localities of these powers are different. He can point out

the seat of the nerve of sensation; he can localize the feeling of affection; he can point to a nerve and say, "There resides the locality of thought."

There are three distinct localities for three distinct qualities, personalities, consciousnesses; yet all these three are one.

ONCE more: we will give proof even beyond all that. The act that a man does is done by one particular part of that man. You may say it was a work of his genius, or of his fancy; it may have been a manifestation of his love, or an exhibition of his courage; yet that work was the work of the whole man: his courage, his intellect, his habits of perseverance, all helped toward the completion of that single work. Just in this way certain special works are attributed to certain personalities of the Deity; the work of redemption being attributed to one, the work of sanctification to another. And yet just as the whole man was engaged in doing that work, so does the whole Deity perform that work which is attributed to one essential.

TRUTH.

CULTIVATE the love of truth. I do not mean veracity: that is another thing. Veracity is the correspondence between a proposition and a man's belief. Truth is the correspondence of the proposition with fact. The love of truth is the love of realities,—the determination to rest upon facts, and not on semblances. Take an illustration of the way in which the habit of cultivating truth is got. Two boys see a misshapen, hideous object in the dark. One goes up to the cause of his terror, examines it, learns what it is; he knows the truth, and the truth has made him free. The other leaves it in mystery and unexplained vagueness, and is a slave for life to superstitious and indefinite terrors. Romance, prettiness, "dim religious light," awe and mystery—these are not the atmosphere of Christ's gospel of liberty. Base the heart on facts. Truth alone makes free.

THE truth is infinite as the firmament above you. In childhood, both seem near and measurable; but with years

they grow and grow, and seem farther off, and farther and grander, and deeper and vaster, as God Himself; till you smile to remember how you thought you could touch the sky, and blush to recollect the proud and self-sufficient way in which you used to talk of knowing or preaching "the truth."

And once again: the truth is made up of principles,—an inward life, not any mere formula of words. God's character—spiritual worship—the Divine life in the soul. How shall I put that into sentences, ten or ten thousand? "The words which I speak unto you, they are truth, and they are *life*." How could Pilate's question be answered except by a life? The truth, then, which Pilate wanted—which you want, and I want—is not the boundless verities, but truth of inward life. Truth for me,—Truth enough to guide me in this darkling world, enough to teach me how to live and how to die.

Now, the appointed ways to teach this Truth: they are three,—independence, humbleness, action.

From the trial-hour of Christ—from the Cross of the Son of God—there arises the principle to which all His life bore witness, that the first lesson of Christian life is this, Be true; and the second this, Be true; and the third this, Be true.

It seems to me that this feeling of vagueness is inevitable when we dare to launch out upon the sea of truth. I remember that half-painful, half-sublime sensation in the first voyage I took out of sight of land when I was a boy; when the old landmarks and horizon were gone, and I felt as if I had no home. It was a pain to find the world so large. By degrees the mind got familiarized to that feeling, and a joyful sense of freedom came. So I think it is with spiritual truth. It is a strangely desolate feeling to perceive that the "Truth" and the "Gospel" that we have known were but a small home-farm in the great universe; but at last I think we begin to see sun, moon and stars as before, and to discover that we are not lost, but free, with a latitude and longitude as certain, and far grander than before.

THE condition of arriving at truth is not severe habits of investigation, but innocence of life and humbleness of heart. Truth is felt, not reasoned, out; and if there be any truths which are only appreciable by the acute understanding, we may be sure at once that these do not constitute the soul's life, nor error in these the soul's death. For instance, the metaphysics of God's Being; the "*plan*," as they call it, "of salvation;" the exact distinction between the Divine and human in Christ's Person. On all these subjects you may read and read till the brain is dizzy and the heart's action is stopped; so that of course the mind is bewildered. But on subjects of Right and Wrong, Divine and Diabolic, Noble and Base, I believe sophistry cannot puzzle so long as the life is right.

It is an endless work to be uprooting weeds. Plant the ground with wholesome vegetation, and then the juices which would have otherwise fed rankness will pour themselves into a more vigorous growth; the dwindled weeds will be easily raked out then. It is an endless task to be refuting error. Plant truth, and the error will pine away.

HE that is habituated to deceptions and artificialities in trifles will try in vain to be true in matters of importance; for truth is a thing of habit rather than of will. You cannot in any given case, by any sudden and single effort, will to be true if the habit of your life has been insincerity.

TRUTH is given, not to be contemplated, but to be done. Life is an action — not a thought; and the penalty paid by him who speculates on truth is that by degrees the very truth he holds becomes to him a falsehood.

UNITY.

I DISTINGUISH the unity of comprehensiveness from the unity of mere singularity. The word one, as oneness, is an ambiguous word. There is a oneness belonging to the army as well as to every soldier in the army. The army is one, and that is the oneness of unity; the soldier is one, but that is the oneness of the unit. There is a difference between

the oneness of a body and the oneness of a member of that body. The body is many, and a unity of manifold comprehensiveness. An arm or a member of a body is one, but that is the unity of singularity. Without unity, my Christian brethren, peace must be impossible. There can be no peace in the one single soldier of an army. You do not speak of the harmony of one member of a body. There is peace in an army, or in a kingdom joined with other kingdoms; there is harmony in a member united with other members. There is no peace in a unit; there is no possibility of the harmony of that which is but one in itself. In order to have peace you must have a higher unity, and therein consists the unity of God's own Being. The unity of God is the basis of the peace of God,—meaning, by the unity of God, the comprehensive manifoldness of God, and not merely the singularity in the number of God's Being.

THERE is no discord between the powers and attributes of the mind of God; there is no discord between His justice and His love; there is no discord demanding some miserable expedient to unite them together, such as some theologians imagined when they described the sacrifice and atonement of our Redeemer by saying it is the clever expedient whereby God reconciles His justice with His love. God's justice and love are one. Infinite justice must be infinite love. Justice is but another sign of love. The infinite rest of the "*I am*" of God arises out of the harmony of His attributes.

WE observe respecting this unity that it subsists between things not similar or alike, but things dissimilar or unlike. There is no unity in the separate atoms of a sand-pit; they are things similar; there is an aggregate or collection of them. Even if they be hardened in a mass they are not one, they do not form a unity: they are simply a mass. There is no unity in a flock of sheep; it is simply a repetition of a number of things similar to each other. If you strike off from a thousand five hundred, or if you strike off nine hundred, there is nothing lost of unity, because there never was unity. A flock of one thousand or a flock of five is just as much a flock as any other number.

WE are one in Christ—one family. Human blessedness is impossible except through union one with another. But union is impossible except in God.

WORDS.

I KNOW the value, and, in their place, the need of strong words. I know that the Redeemer used them: stronger and keener never fell from the lips of man. I am aware that our Reformers used coarse and vehement language, but we do not imbibe the Reformers' spirit by the mere adoption of the Reformers' language; nay, paradoxical as it may seem, the use of their language even proves a degeneracy from their spirit.

THERE is a solemn power in words, because words are the expression of character. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

WORKS.

UNDER no circumstances, whether of pain, or grief, or disappointment, or irreparable mistake, can it be true that there is not something to be *done*, as well as something to be suffered. And thus it is that the spirit of Christianity draws over our life, not a leaden cloud of remorse and despondency, but a sky, not perhaps of radiant, but yet of most serene and chastened and manly hope. There is a past which is gone forever, but there is a future which is still our own.

SUPPOSE I say "A tree cannot be struck without thunder," that is true, for there is never destructive lightning without thunder. But, again, if I say "The tree was struck by lightning without thunder," that is true, too, if I mean that the lightning alone struck it, without the thunder striking it. Yet read the two assertions together and they seem contradictory. So, in the same way, St. Paul says, "Faith justifies without works"; that is, faith *only* is that which justifies us, not works. But St. James says, "Not a faith which is without works." There will be works with

faith, as there is thunder with lightning; but just as it is not the thunder but the lightning, the lightning without the thunder, that strikes the tree, so it is not the works which justify. Put it in one sentence: Faith alone justifies, but not the faith which is alone. Lightning alone strikes, but not the lightning which is alone without thunder; for that is only summer lightning, and harmless. You will see that there is an ambiguity in the words "without and alone," and the two apostles use them in different senses, just as I have used them in the above simile about the lightning.

All this will be more plain if you consider what faith is.

A STUDENT of medicine, listening to a clinical lecture by the bedside of a patient, learns a great deal about muscles, nerves, and names; but I fancy a feeble attempt in great pain to stagger across the floor of the hospital teaches more of the practice of health and use of the muscles than all the clinical lectures in the world. Crutches are capital for locomotion, but for strengthening the limb which they save from the ground, until its bulk becomes flaccid, not very capital, I guess. No; rely upon it, the spiritual life is not knowing, nor hearing, but doing. We only know so far as we can do; we learn to do by doing, and we learn to know by doing: what we do truly, rightly, in the way of duty, that, and only that, we are. Sermons are crutches,—I believe often the worst things for spiritual health that ever were invented.

A VERY pregnant lesson. Life passes, work is permanent. It is all going—fleeting and withering. Youth goes. Mind decays. That which is done remains. Through ages, through eternity, what you have done for God, that, and that only, you are. Ye that are workers, and count it the soul's worst disgrace to feel life passing in idleness and uselessness, take courage. Deeds never die.

BE up and doing—fill up every hour, leaving no crevice or craving for a remorse, or a repentance to creep through afterward. Let not the mind brood on self: save it from speculation,—from those stagnant moments in which the

awful teachings of the spirit grope into the unfathomable unknown, and the heart torments itself with questions which are insoluble except to an active life. For the awful Future becomes intelligible only in the light of a felt and active Present. Go, return on thy way if thou art desponding — *on thy way* health of spirit will return.

THERE is something sacred in work. To work in the appointed sphere is to be religious — as religious as to pray. This is not the forbidden world.

WORLD.

THE visible world presents a different aspect to each individual man. You will say that the same things you see are seen by all,—that the forest, the valley, the flood, and the sea, are the same to all; and yet all these things so seen, to different minds are a myriad of different universes. One man sees in that noble river an emblem of eternity; he closes his lips and feels that God is there. Another sees nothing in it but a very convenient road for transporting his spices, silks and merchandise. To one this world appears useful, to another beautiful. Whence comes the difference? From the soul within us. It can make of this world a vast chaos—"a mighty maze without a plan;" or a mere machine—a collection of lifeless forces; or it can make it the living vesture of God, the tissue through which He can become visible to us. In the spirit in which we look on it the world is an arena for mere self-advancement, or a place for noble deeds, in which self is forgotten and God is all.

THE world you complain of as impure and wrong is not God's world, but your world; the blight, the dullness, the blank, are all your own. The light which is in you has become darkness, and therefore the light itself is dark.

THE legislator prohibits crime; the moralist, transgression; the religionist, sin. To these Christianity superadds a new enemy—the world and the things of the world. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

MEASURE all by the Cross. Do you want success? The Cross is failure. Do you want a name? The Cross is infamy. Is it to be gay and happy that you live? The Cross is pain and sharpness. Do you live that the will of God may be done in you and by you in life and death? Then, and only then, the Spirit of the Cross is in you. When once a man has learned that, the power of the world is gone; and no man need bid him, in denunciation or in invitation, not to love the world. He cannot love the world: for he has got an ambition above the world. He has planted his foot upon the Rock, and when all else is gone, he at least abides forever.

WORLDLINESS.

THE shallow ground was stony ground. And it is among the children of light enjoyment and unsettled life that we must look for stony heartlessness: not in the world of business, not among the poor, crushed to the earth by privation and suffering. These harden the character, but often leave the heart soft. If you wish to know what hollowness and heartlessness are, you must seek for them in the world of light, elegant, superficial fashion, where frivolity has turned the heart into a rockbed of selfishness. Say what men will of the heartlessness of trade, it is nothing compared with the heartlessness of fashion. Say what they will of the atheism of science, it is nothing to the atheism of that round of pleasure in which many a heart lives,—dead while it lives.

A QUARREL had arisen between Abraham's herdsmen and Lot's. It was necessary to part. Abraham, in that noble way of his, gave him the choice of the country when they separated. Either hand for Abraham,—either the right hand or the left:—what cared the Pilgrim of the Invisible for fertile lands or rugged sands? Lot chose wisely, as they of the world speak. Well, if this world be all:—he got a rich soil, became a prince, had kings for his society and neighbors. It was nothing to Lot that "the men of the land were sinners before the Lord exceedingly,"—enough that it was well watered everywhere. But his wife became

enervated by voluptuousness, and his children tainted with ineradicable corruption,—the moral miasma of the society wherein he had made his home. Two warnings God gave him: first, his home and property were spoiled by the enemy; then came the fire from heaven, and he fled from the cities of the plain a ruined man. His wife looked back with lingering regret upon the splendid home of her luxury and voluptuousness, and was overwhelmed in the encrusting salt. His children carried with them into a new world the plague-spot of that profligacy which had been the child of affluence and idleness.

It is strange how the harass of perpetual occupation shuts God out. It is strange how much mingling with the world, politics, and those things which belong to advancing civilization—things which are very often in the way of our duty—deaden the delicate sense of right and wrong. Let Christians be on their guard by double prayerfulness when duty makes them men of business, or calls them to posts of worldly activity.

WORLDLINESS, then, consists in these three things,—attachment to the Outward, attachment to the Transitory, attachment to the Unreal: in opposition to love for the Inward, the Eternal, the True: and the one of these affections is necessarily expelled by the other. If a man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; but let a man once feel the power of the kingdom that is within, and then the love fades of that emotion whose life consists only in the thrill of a nerve or the vivid sensation of a feeling: he loses his happiness and wins his blessedness. Let a man get but one glimpse of the King in His beauty, and then the forms and shapes of things here are to him but the types of an invisible loveliness,—types which he is content should break and fade. Let but a man feel truth,—that goodness is greatness, that there is no other greatness,—and then the degrading reverence with which the titled of this world bow before wealth, and the ostentation with which the rich of this world profess their familiarity with title:—all the pride of life, what is it to him? The love of the Inward—

Everlasting, Real — the love, that is, of the Father,—annihilates the love of the world.

THEY who know the world of fashion tell us that the tone adopted there is, either to be, or to affect to be, sated with enjoyment, to be proof against surprise, to have lost all keenness of enjoyment, and to have all keenness of wonder gone. That which ought to be men's shame becomes their boast — unsusceptibility of any fresh emotion.

WORSHIP.

THERE is a stage of worship prior to that of man-worship. Man finds himself helpless among the powers of nature, and worships the forces themselves which he finds around him. This takes different forms. The highest is the worship of that host of heaven from which Job professed himself to be free. With some it is the adoration of lifeless things: the oak which has been made sacred by the lightning-stroke; the "meteoric stone" which fell down from Jupiter. So the Israelites adored the brazen serpent, with which power had once been in connection. Evidently there can be no holy influence in this. Men worship them by fear, fortify themselves by charms and incantations,—do not try to please God by being holy, but defend themselves from danger by jugglery. The Christians of the early ages carried about bits of consecrated bread to protect themselves from shipwreck.

Besides this, men have worshiped brute life — some animal, exhibiting a limited quality, which is yet reckoned a type of the Divine. The hawk-eyed deities of Egypt, for instance, implied omniscience. Beast-worship was that of Egypt. Israel learned it there, and in an early stage of their history imitated the highest form which they knew, that of Apis, in their golden calf.

WORSHIP must have a form. Adoration finds a person, and if it cannot find one it will imagine one. Gentleness and purity are words for a philosopher; but a man whose heart wants something to adore will find for himself a gentle one, a pure one, incarnate purity and love, gentleness robed

in flesh and blood, before whom his knee may bend, and to whom the homage of his spirit can be given. You cannot adore except a person.

WOMAN.

THERE are two rocks in this world of ours on which the soul must either anchor or be wrecked. The one is God; the other is the sex opposite to itself. The one is the "Rock of Ages," on which if the human soul anchors it lives the blessed life of faith; against which if the soul be dashed and broken there ensues the wreck of Atheism — the worst ruin of the soul. The other rock is of another character. Blessed is the man, blessed is the woman, whose life-experience has taught a confiding belief in the excellencies of the sex opposite to their own — a blessedness second only to the blessedness of salvation; and the ruin in the other case is second only to the ruin of everlasting perdition — the same wreck and ruin of the soul.

A MAN's idolatry is for an idea, a woman's is for a person. A man suffers for a monarchy, a woman for a king. A man's martyrdom differs from a woman's. Nay, even in their religion, personality marks the one, attachment to an idea or principle the other. Woman adores God in His personality, man adores Him in His attributes. At least that is, on the whole, the characteristic difference.

AND this is the glory of womanhood,—surely no common glory!—surely one which, if she rightly comprehended her place on earth, might enable her to accept its apparent humiliation unrepiningly; the glory of unsensualizing coarse and common things, sensual things, the objects of mere sense, meat and drink and household cares, elevating them, by the spirit in which she ministers them, into something transfigured and sublime.

The humblest mother of a poor family, who is cumbered with much serving or watching over a hospitality which she is too poor to delegate to others, or toiling for love's sake in household work, needs no emancipation in God's sight. It is the prerogative and the glory of her womanhood to con-

secrete the meanest things by a ministry which is not for self.

THINK we that there is no meaning hidden in the mystery that the Son of God was the Virgin's Son? To Him through life there remained the early recollections of a pure mother. Blessed beyond all common blessedness is the man who can look back to that. God has given to him a talisman which will carry him triumphant through many a temptation.

BEFORE Christ the qualities honored as Divine were peculiarly the virtues of the man,—courage, wisdom, truth, strength. But Christ proclaimed the Divine nature of qualities entirely opposite,—meekness, obedience, affection, purity. He said that the pure in heart should see God. He pronounced the beatitudes of meekness, and lowliness, and poverty of spirit. Now, observe these were all of the order of graces which are distinctively feminine. And it is the peculiar feature of Christianity that it exalts not strength nor intellect, but gentleness, and lovingness, and virgin purity.

THE glory of true womanhood consists in being *herself*: not in striving to be something else. It is the false paradox and heresy of this present age to claim for her as a glory the right to leave her sphere. Her glory lies *in* her sphere, and God has given her a sphere distinct; as in the Epistle to the Church of Corinth, when in that wise chapter St. Paul rendered unto womanhood the things which were woman's, and unto manhood the things which were man's.

YOUTH.

THERE is a moment in every true life—to some it comes very early—when the old routine of duty is not large enough,—when the parental roof seems too low, because the Infinite above is arching over the soul,—when the old formulas in creeds, catechisms, and articles seem to be narrow, and they must either be thrown aside or else transformed into living and breathing realities,—when the

earthly father's authority is being superseded by the claims of a Father in heaven.

That is a lonely, lonely moment, when the young soul first feels God,—when this earth is recognized as an “awful place, yea, the very gate of heaven,”—when the dream-ladder is seen planted against the skies, and we wake, and the dream haunts us as a sublime reality.

You may detect the approach of that moment in the young man or the young woman by the awakened spirit of inquiry,—by a certain restlessness of look, and an eager earnestness of tone.

THE young are by God's providence exempted in a great measure from anxiety: they are as the apostles were in relation to their Master: their friends stand between them and the struggles of existence. They are not called upon to think for themselves, the burden is borne by others. They get their bread without knowing or caring how it is paid for; they smile and laugh without a suspicion of the anxious thoughts of day and night which a parent bears to enable them to smile. So to speak, they are sleeping—and it is not a guilty sleep—while another watches.

My young brethren, youth is one of the precious opportunities of life, rich in blessing if you choose to make it so, but having in it the materials of undying remorse if you suffer it to pass unimproved. Your quiet Gethsemane is now. Gethsemane's struggles you cannot know yet. Take care that you do not learn too well Gethsemane's sleep. Do you know how you can imitate the apostles in their fatal sleep? You can suffer your young days to pass idly and uselessly away; you can live as if you had nothing to do but to enjoy yourselves; you can let others think for you, and not try to become thoughtful yourselves; till the business and the difficulties of life come upon you unprepared, and you find yourselves like men waking from sleep, hurried, confused, scarcely able to stand, with all the faculties bewildered, not knowing right from wrong, led headlong to evil, just because you have not given yourselves in time to learn what is good. All that is sleep.

THERE is something in earthly rapture which cloyes, and when we drink deep of pleasure, there is left behind some-

thing of that loathing which follows a repast on sweets. When a boy sets out in life, it is all fresh,—freshness in feeling, zest in his enjoyment, purity in his heart. Cherish that, my young brethren, while you can; lose it, and it never comes again. It is not an easy thing to cherish it, for it demands restraint in pleasure, and no young heart loves that. Religion has only calm, sober, perhaps monotonous, pleasures to offer at first; the deep rapture of enjoyment comes in after-life, and that will not satisfy the young heart. Men will know what pleasure is, and they drink deep. Keen delight, feverish enjoyment,—that is what you long for; and these emotions lose their delicacy and their relish, and will only come at the bidding of gross excitements. The ecstasy which once rose to the sight of the rainbow in the sky, or the bright brook, or the fresh morning, comes languidly at last only in the crowded midnight room, or the excitement of commercial speculation, or beside the gaming-table, or amidst the fever of politics.

LET the young be happy. Health, spirits, youth, society, accomplishments,—let them enjoy these, and thank God with no misgiving. Let there be no half-remorseful sensations, as though they were stolen joys. Christ had no sympathy with that tone of mind which scowls on human happiness: His first manifestation of power was at a marriage feast. Who would check the swallow's flight, or silence the gush of happy melody which the thrush pours forth in spring?

AND therefore, my young brethren, let it be impressed upon you,—NOW is a time, infinite in its value for eternity, which will never return again. Sleep not: learn that there is a very solemn work of heart which must be done while the stillness of the garden of your Gethsemane gives you time. Now — or Never.

The treasures at your command are infinite,—treasures of time, treasures of youth, treasures of opportunity, that grown-up men would sacrifice everything they have to possess. Oh, for ten years of youth back again with the added experience of age! But it cannot be, they must be content to sleep on now and take their rest.

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